

ESSAYS

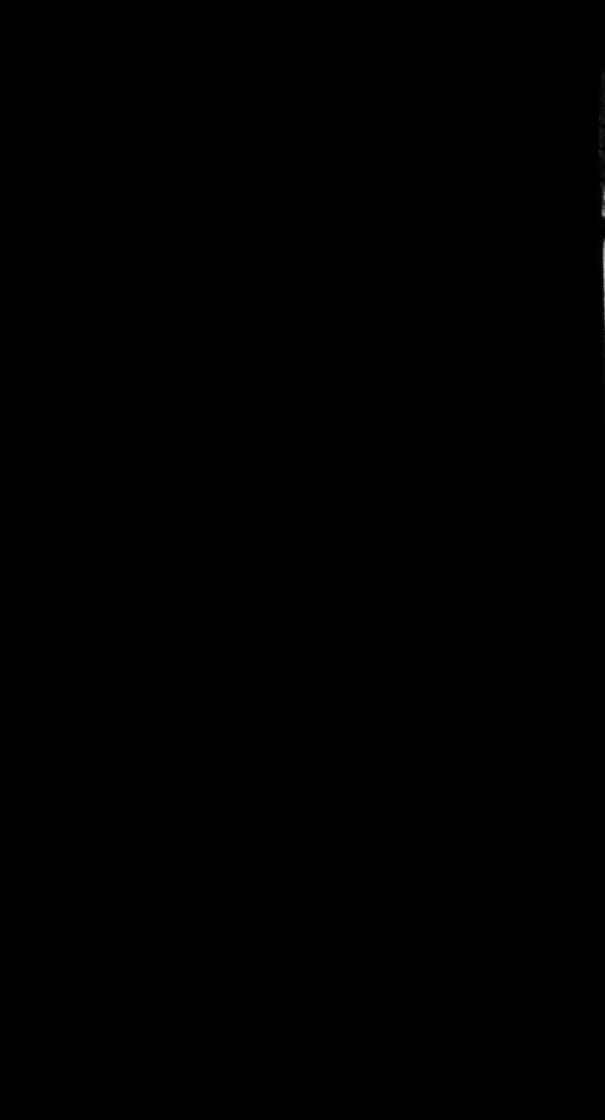
On Several

SUBJECTS.

Written By
Sir Tho. Pope Blount.

Conamur Tenues Grandia.
Hor. Lib. 1. Ode. 6.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Richard Bently,*
in Russel-street in Covent-
Garden. MDCXCII.



The PREFACE.

Reader,

TIS as impossible for an Author to please all Mens fancies, as it is for a Cook to gratifie every Man's palate. For the Minds of Men are of different Frames and Tempers, and therefore those Notions that are pleasing to one Man, do often prove nauseous to another. This then is the reason, that Authors are either disown'd, or approv'd, not according to their own merits, or demerits, but even as the Reader stands inclin'd, who generally frames his Judgement from his own settl'd Humour, or Opinion; And as the Book agrees, or disagrees with that, so is the Author to receive his Fate. And thus is verified that known saying, Quicquid recipitur, recipitur ad modum Recipientis.

What kind of Reception this little

THE PREFACE.

Treatise may find in the World, I neither know, nor value: I writ it in my idle hours, for my own Entertainment: And therefore if it relishes not thy Gusto, the only way to be even with me, is for thee to turn Author, and then (possibly) I may have occasion to return the Compliment. The Age we now live in is both Critical, and Censorious; and therefore if there be any part of a Book, which (either through the unhappy style of the Author, or the ill nature of the Reader) seems to admit of a double Construction, the Author may assure himself it shall be taken in the worst; upon which Consideration, I think it proper to acquaint thee, That whatsoever Opinion the Clergy may please to have of this Book, or its Author, I unfeignedly declare my self to be a true Honourer of them, I mean, of such of them, as live up to the Honour of that Holy Profession, and for those that do not, I as little Court their Favour, as I value their Censure.

ESSAY

THE
CONTENTS.

ESSAY I.

That INTEREST Governs
the World: And that Popery
is nothing but Priest-Craft, or an
Invention of the Priests to get
Money. Page 1

ESSAY II.

The great Mischief and Prejudice of
LEARNING. And that a
Wise Man ought to be preferr'd before
a Man of LEARNING. P. 33

ESSAY III.

Of Education, and Custome; The great
Influence it hath upon most Men.
But that a good Education is not al-
way Effectual. p. 62

ESSAY

The Contents.

ESSAY IV.

Of the Ancients : And the Respect that is due unto them : That we should not too much enslave our selves to their Opinions.

P. 77

ESSAY V.

Whether the Men of this present Age are any way inferiour to those of former Ages, either in respect of Vertue, Learning, or long Life.

p. 89

ESSAY VI.

Of Passion : And whether the Passions are an Advantage, or Disadvantage to Men.

P. 141

ESSAY VII.

The Variety of Opinions : Whence it proceeds : The uncertainty of Humane Knowledge.

P. 155

ESSAY

ESSAY I.

That INTEREST governs the World : And that Popery is nothing but Priest-Craft, or an Invention of the Priests to get Money.

INTEREST and Profit are the great *Diana* of this World. *These*, saith an Ingenious Author, *like God, sit at the top of Jacob's Ladder, and all our Actions are but Steps and Rounds to go up to them.* To this Shrine the greatest part of Mankind are ready to offer Incense, and with this Golden Hook even the wisest and best of Men are apt to be caught. INTEREST is of that Magnetick quality, that our affections are almost irresistibly attracted by it: It is the Pole to which we turn, and we commonly

B

rame

frame our Judgements according to its direction. Men generally look more after the *Dowry* than the *Beauty* of Truth, its correspondency to their Interests, than its evidence to their understandings. An useful Error hath often found free admission, when important Truths, but contrary to Mens Preconceptions or Interests, have been forbidden entrance. Temporal Expectations bring in whole droves to the *Mahumetan* Faith; and we too well know the same holds thousands in the *Romish*. An Advantageous cause never wanted Profelytes. The Eagles will be where the Carcase is: And that shall have the faith of most, which is best able to pay them for't. In all Ages of the World INTEREST govern'd Mankind; and therefore we see the wisest Law-Maker, still built upon this foundation; making it the Interest of the Community to put their Laws in Execution; hence *Plutarch* reported *Solon* to have said, That he had so train'd his Laws, that the Citizens were

were sensible, it was more their Interest to observe them, than to Violate them. Almighty God, when he first gave Laws to his own People the *Jews*, was pleased to consider them as a Worldly, Covetous sort of People; and therefore to make their Obedience the more easie, he gives them a Constitution agreeable to their Genius, promising them all sorts of Temporal Blessings, such as *possession of the Land, freedom from Bondage, &c.* He very well knew, that Worldly Interest would go a great deal further than the pure, intrinsic worth of Vertue and Goodness; and therefore that the surest way to enforce his Laws, was by striking upon their Affections. Thus is God said to deal with Men, just as the Husbandman in the Gospel did; by proffering his *Penny*, before he can prevail with them to work in his *Vineyard*. Christ observ'd, That the Multitudes throng'd after him more for the Loaves and Fishes, than for his Doctrine; intimating that few lov'd him

him *Gratis*, but to make advantage by him: And this the Devil knew too well, when he charg'd *Job* with it, saying, *Does Job serve God for nought?* In a word, *Gain* and *Advantage* is that which every Man aims at; Be the business never so *bad*, you may have it done for Money; and be it never so good, you cannot have it done without. Let us but cast our Eyes upon those two Religions, the *Old Heathenish*, and the *Romish*, and we shall soon see their Respective *Priests* offering Incense to the *Unrighteous Mammon*. No sooner was that, which was called by the name of Religion, planted among the *Heathen*, but immediately a Pert, forward sort of Men, I mean their *Priests*, stood up, and insinuated to the People the absolute Necessity of *Sacrifices*; and that these *Sacrifices* could never be acceptable to the *Gods*, unless they were offer'd up by uncorrupt, Sanctified Hands, meaning their own. How beneficial these *Sacrifices* were to the *Heathen Priests*,
 you

you may easily imagine; Since (according to the old Proverb) 'Tis an ill Cook that can't lick his own Fingers. And unless their *Priests* had found advantage by it, certainly they would never have enjoyed the People such an unaccountable way of worship. For what a strange, and uncouth Belief was it, to think that the most proper way to atone and pacifie their *Offended Gods*, was by Slaying and Sacrificing *Innocent Creatures*? Thus in the first ages of the World did Men suffer themselves to be gull'd and chous'd by the Artifice of their Crafty and Ambitious *Priests*. But before I proceed, I must here (in my own defence) make a short Digression; by desiring the Reader to observe, that the *Sacrifices* I mention, are the *Heathen Sacrifices*; And therefore if any one shall be so disingenuous, as to say that by an *Innuendo* I mean the *Jewish Sacrifices*; I have this to say in answer to such, That their want of Charity in judging that to be my meaning, which I ne-

ver intended, is (I am sure) a much greater Crime, than any thing I have offer'd in the said Discourse. But since I have this Oportunity, I will now declare my thoughts as to the *Jewish Sacrifices*; This therefore I take to be the true and only reason why Almighty God commanded his People the *Jews* the use of *Sacrifices*; not because he himself had any delight in them; but because the *Jews* had been us'd to this kind of Worship, while they were in *Egypt*; which had made a deep root in their minds; and that they were such an obstinate sort of People, that if they had not been comply'd with in this point of *Sacrifices*, (which was a Religion somewhat agreeable to their Idolatrous temper,) they could never have been brought off from their Idolatry, and Heathenish Religion: And therefore Almighty God allow'd the *Jews* the use of *Sacrifices*, as a thing rather agreeable to their Genius and Complexion, than any way suitable to his own pure, Divine Nature. *He did*

did not prescribe these things because they were best, (saith the Reverend Dr. Tillotson,) but because the Temper of that People would then admit of nothing better. But I beg pardon for this Digression, and do now proceed. Was it not also from the same root, I mean, the Covetous temper of the *Heathen Priests*, from whence sprung up the first *Idolatry* that ever was in the World? Those crafty, Covetous *Priests* knew well enough, that the celebrating many Gods, and the introducing several Worships of them, would turn much more to their profit and advantage, than the single Worship of the *Supreme God*: And therefore rather than want *Gods*, they took care to Coin a sufficient number of them; there being no less (according to *Varro*) than thirty thousand *Heathen Deities*. And that the *Priests* (let them pretend to what they would) consulted not herein the good of the People, so much, as their own particular Interests, does most manifestly appear; by the choice they

made of their *Gods*; most of which (we know) were renowned for nothing so much as for their Vices: *Mars* a bloody God; *Bacchus* a drunken God; *Mercury* a cheating God; and so proportionably in the several kinds all the rest; Nay, even their great capital God, *Jupiter*; was guilty of almost all the Capital Vices. And therefore no wonder, we find such gross and extravagant things in the old *Heathenish* Religion, when the very Gods, whom they Worshipp'd, gave such Encouragement thereunto by their lewd Example: And where the *Gods* are naught, who can expect the *Religion* should be good; for 'tis the nature of all Religions, to encline Men to imitate him whom they worship. Another Artifice whereby the *Heathen Priests* us'd to make themselves esteem'd and valued, was that Invention of theirs, the setting up of *Oracles*. 'Tis hard to say, who were guilty of the greater folly, the *Ignorant Heathen*, who believ'd those Predictions to come from *Heaven*; or those

those *Superstitious Christians*, who thought they came from the *Devil*; since they were both under a gross mistake. For certainly to any *Man*, who is unbiass'd in opinion, and who dares suffer himself to think beyond the narrow Rules of his Education, they cannot appear to be any thing but the meer juggling and Imposture of the *Heathen Priests*; who upon all occasions were ready to flatter the Prince, and to insinuate to the People the absolute necessity of complying with the Ambitious Designs of their present Rulers. Hence then, whenever there was any extraordinary occasion for making use of the People, as in time of War, it was always contriv'd that the *Oracle* should be *Consulted*, which never fail'd to *Pronounce* in favour of the Present Government, And therefore, no wonder the *Priests* were such Favourites at Court, since they were so useful to the *Prince* in the managing and steering of the common People. Thus it plainly appears, That *Inter-
rest*

rest was the Principle of those *Heathen Priests*. Let us now see, whether, when *Popery* came upon the Stage, the World was any thing mended; or whether the *Popish Priests* were Men more abstracted from Worldly Interest, or no. In after times, when *Rome Pagan* became *Rome Christian*, then sprung there up a new Set of Men, who for Craft and Subtilty did many degrees outgo their Predecessors, the *Heathen Priests*; These appeared but meer Bunglers, compared to this new Brood, whose very *Religion* was nothing else but *Sacerdotal Interest*. For whoever examines the whole Fabrick of *Popery*, shall find that the Corner-stone of that Building is Interest: And were it not for the *Profitable* part, I question not but the *Foolish* part of *Popery* would soon be laught out of doors. But since the true nature of Things is best to be learnt in their *Minute Parts*, we will lay aside *Generals*, and descend to *Particulars*: To begin therefore with the very Original

ginal of *Popery*, which you will find to be thus. As on the one hand it must be confess'd, that the Primitive Christians, who were generally Subjects of the *Roman* Empire, had a very great deference and respect for the Bishops of *Rome*, because that was the *Imperial* City; so on the other hand, Church-History plainly shews, That, notwithstanding this great deference, the Bishops of *Rome* had no Authority or Jurisdiction out of their own *Province*, that is, beyond the Suburbicary Region of *Italy*, till after the Division of the *Roman* Empire into Eastern and Western. It was not long after that Division, and chiefly upon the weakness of the Western Empire, that that Power, which we now call the *Papacy*, grew up. As the Empire decay'd, so by degrees this encreased and gather'd Strength; the design being at first, not to set up a new *Religion*, but a new *Monarchy* in the place of the old then expiring. Thus while the *Roman* Empire was gasping for Life,
did

did the Bishops of *Rome* force it to make what Will and Testament they pleas'd. Being thus Establish'd, and making *Rome*, whose name was still Venerable, the Seat of their Dominion, they soon obtain'd a Supremacy over the Western World. In this manner, and with these Steps did the *Papacy* first advance it self ; their Designs being apparently' Secular, tending not to the Salvation of Mens Souls, but the Support of their own grandure. And therefore these *Spiritual Machiavillians*, according to the old Policy, are for preserving their Empire after the same way and manner as it was at first acquired. No wonder then that the chief *Topick* of *Popery*, is *Argumentum ab Utili* ; which of all Arguments carries the greatest force in the Church of *Rome* : And this will more plainly appear, if we do but draw up the Curtain, and present you with *Popery* in its full light. 'Tis scarce within the reach of Arithmetick, what vast, prodigious Sums these several Doctrines

doctrines [the Popes Supremacy, Purgatory, Indulgences, Auricular Confession, and the Celibacy of the Clergy] bring in to the Church; And therefore as one wittily expresseth it, *They must maintain them, because they are maintained by them.*

I. As to the *Pope's Supremacy*. How slight a Foundation this Doctrine hath, I think to any rational Man will soon appear; for supposing *St. Peter* was Bishop of *Rome*, (though the Learned *Dr. Barrow*, and many others are of opinion he never was there,) and that as Metropolitan thereof he had the precedency of the rest of the *Apostles*; what then? Could hence a sufficient Power be devolv'd on his Successor, to raise a real Monarchy, and to claim an absolute Jurisdiction over the whole World, with a Power to dispose of Crowns and Kingdoms? This is certainly a *Non Sequitur*. Nor was *St. Peter* ever vested with any such Priviledges as these, nor did his Successors for many Ages ever Challenge them; And at last

last the only title the *Pope* had to them, was Usurpation. But how unreasonable soever this Doctrine may appear to those who get not by it, his *Holiness* hath reason to keep it up, since it serves to the filling his Coffers ; And if he should once part with it, he at the same time Lops off the best Branch of his Revenue.

2. As to *Purgatory*. This Doctrine was never so much as thought of till *St. Austin's* time, who both *Said* it, and *Unsaid* it, and at last left it doubtful ; Nor did it come into any sort of Credit till about two hundred Years after, in the time of *Pope Gregory* the first. The *Papists* themselves are so divided as to all the points and Circumstances of this Doctrine, that possibly it will not a little entertain the Reader, to see the foolish variety of Opinions relating to this Doctrine. First as to the place, where they suppose this Imaginary Goal to be ; *Eckius* will have it to be in the bottom of the Sea ; Others will have it either in Mount *Ætna*, or *Vesuvius* ;
But

But *Bernard de Bustis* places it in an Hill in *Ireland*. Next, as to the Torments; *Sir Thomas More* will have them to be only by Fire; but *Fisher*, by Fire and Water; *Lorichius* neither by Fire, nor by Water, but by the violent Convulsions of Hope and Fear. Then, as to the Executioners, or Tormenters; They do as little agree about them; for *Bishop Fisher* will have them to be the Holy Angels; but *Sir Thomas More* to be the very Devils. Then, as to the Sins to be there Expiated; Some will have them to be the *Venial* only; but others say the *Mortal* too. And for the time of the Souls continuance in that State; *Dennis the Carthusian* extends it to the end of the World; whereas *Dominicus à Soto* limits it to ten Years; and others make it depend on the number of *Masses*, and *Offices*, that shall be said or done on their behalf. Lastly, as to the extremity of the pains; *Aquinas* makes them as violent as those of *Hell*; but the *Rhemists*, in their Annotations upon *Revelations*

the

the 14th, Verse the 13th, say, That the Souls there are in a very fine condition: And *Durandus, de Offic. Mortuor. Cap. VII.* between these extreams, gives them some Intermiſſion from thoſe terrible pains, upon Sundays, and Holy Days. So fooliſhly extravagant are theſe ſeveral fancies and conceits of *Purgatory*, that it may not be altogether impertinent to enquire into the Original and Source of this Doctrin. And this will preſently appear to any one who is in the leaſt verſ'd in the Heathen Poets and Philoſophers. Theſe were the firſt Hatchers of this Notion, and from thence was it firſt derived. *Ho-mer*, in the 2^d. Book of his *Odyſſ.* entertains us with long Stories of *Ulyſſes's* deſcent into Hell, the Dialogues of Ghoſts, the Punishment of departed Souls, and the Sacrifices to be offer'd to relieve them; And herein is he imitated by *Virgil*, who, in the Sixth of his *Æneids*, brings in *Anchiſes* diſcourſing at the ſame rate. Nor were their Philoſophers free from theſe

these sort of Dreams; witness *Plato*, who, in his Book *de Anima*, broaches the like Doctrine; And *Cicero*, in *Scipio's Dream*, harps upon the same string. Hence *Bellarmin*, urging several reasons for this Doctrine of Purgatory, his third is taken from the common opinion of all Nations, *Hebrews*, *Mahumetans*, and *Gentiles*, both *Philosophers* and *Poets*. But to conclude this point, as ridiculous as this Doctrine of Purgatory is, there is not any one Opinion in the Church of *Rome*, that the *Romanists* are more zealous in the asserting; Nor is it to be wondred that they are so, since herein they act upon *Demetrius's* Principle, *Because thereby they have their gain*; And therefore well may they be allow'd to be angry, and displeas'd at all those, who speak and write against it; for by that means *their Craft is in danger to be set at nought*. There being no Opinion in their Church, which brings in a better and more constant Revenue, by *Masses*, *Dirges*, *Requiems*, *Trentals*,

C

and

and *Anniversaries*, besides *Casualties* and *Deodands*, by dying Persons, or their Friends, in hopes of a speedier release out of the pains of *Purgatory*. So that if this Opinion were once out of Countenance in the World, they would then lose one of the best Arts they have of upholding the Grandure of their Church. And it is very remarkable, That the fear of losing this Income, was one main Impediment to restrain the Pope from yielding to a Reformation.

3. As to *Indulgences* and *Pardons*. In the Primitive times, when the *Christians* had committed any heinous offence, as for example, either in denying their Faith, or Sacrificing to Idols, for fear of Persecution; the Parties offending were enjoyn'd some severe and long *Penance*: And the rigour of this, the Bishops, or Pastors, in their respective Congregations, had power, (if they saw Cause) to mitigate at their discretion; which Mitigation, or Relaxation of Punishment, was called an *Indulgence*, or sometimes

sometimes a *Pardon*. And this was derived from St. *Paul*, who releas'd the *Incestuous Corinthian* from the bond of Excommunication, upon his Humiliation, and serious Repentance. This manner of *Indulgence* was Ancient, and of long Continuance in the Primitive Church. The first account we have of perverting this Custom, and the prostituting it to Secular ends, was in the time of Pope *Gregory* the first, about the Year 600. And ever since that time, 'tis scarce credible what an immense Sum this Doctrine hath brought in to the Church. And certainly, of all the Arts that the Church of *Rome* hath for the raising of Money, this is the cleverest and neatest Contrivance; and therefore one wittily calls these *Indulgences*, *Emulgences*; and even by the *Romanists* themselves they are call'd, in their truest Signification, *The Treasury of the Church*. The Pope is the sole Dispenser and Disposer of these *Indulgences*; and therefore whenever he hath occasion, or a

Mind to fill his Treasury, all that he needs to do, is, upon pretence of War against the Infidels or Hereticks, to send out, and proclaim Marts, and Sales for these *Indulgences*, upon condition that those, who would disburse any Sums of Money (which is all to be laid out (as he pretends) upon the said occasion,) should have *Pardons* and *Indulgences* for numbers of Years proportionable to the Sums they could, or would deposite; *Nam aliter non absolvebantur, nisi tribuerent secundum Posse suam, & facultatem suam*; For otherwise they could not be absolv'd, except they did disburse as much as their abilities would afford, as *Henr. de Knighton*, an English Historian in *Richard* the Second's time, honestly and plainly tells us; And then as for the Poor and Indigent, truly they deserve our pity, when the *Taxa Camerae Apostolicae* deals thus plainly with them, *Nota diligenter quòd hujusmodi Gratiae non conceduntur Pauperibus; QVIA non habent, ergò non possunt Consolari*; Note
diligently

diligently; That such graces are not granted to the Poor; Because they have not wherewithal, they cannot be comforted. A very sad Case indeed! Thus, though our Saviour tells us, how, hard it is for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; yet by the Religion of *Popery* the difficulty lies wholly on the Poor Man's side; and the only Sin capable of *Damning* a Rich Man, is that of *Covetousness*; for let him but see his *Holiness* well, and he may then safely sing a *Requiem* to his Soul.

4. As to *Auricular Confession*. The necessity of this Doctrine was unknown to the Fathers of the Primitive Church. Nay, about a Thousand Years after Christ, it was held disputable in the *Roman Church*. And though the Practice of it was impos'd by Pope *Innocent*, in his Council of *Lateran*; yet even then it remain'd disputable as to the Doctrine, till the *Council of Trent* gave it the Sanction of *Divine Faith*. At first it was voluntary, and only us'd in

Case of a troubled Conscience, or a strong Temptation : But it is now made necessary at stated times, in all probability to make the *Priest* Master of every Man's Secrets. This is the main Curb of the Laity, whereby the Clergy hold them in awe ; for by this means they have an Intelligencer in the breast of every Great Man of their Communion ; Which is a thing of that vast Consequence, that if ever they part with it, then farewell *Popery*.

5. As to the *Celibacy* of the Clergy. That this Custom was derived from the *Heathens*, will plainly appear ; *Clemens Alexandrinus* tells us, That the *Ancient Hereticks* took occasion to condemn Marriage from the Precepts and Practices of Pagan Philosophers. And *St. Hierom* saith, that the *Athenian Hierophanta's* to this day, by supping the Broth of *Hemlock*, make themselves Chast (being forbidden Marriage,) before they were admitted into Sacred Orders, or advanced to *Prelatical* Dignity. And
Alexander

Alexander ab Alexandro informs us, That the Priests of *Cybele* did castrate themselves, that they might be Chast. And he further adds in the same place, That those who performed their greatest Solemnities (or their Chief Priests) that they might continue in Chast Religion, and escape the Contagion of Women, did emasculate themselves with certain Herbs. And *Euripides* testifieth, That in *Crete* those whom they call'd the *Prophets of Jupiter*, do not only abstain from Flesh, but also from all savoury Meat. And the like did the *Indian Magi*, who were advanced to the *Priesthood of the Sun*: And among the *Affyrians*, the Priests of *Diana Ecbatana* liv'd in perpetual Virginity. To add more Testimonies is needless, since the *Romanists* are themselves so far from denying it, that several of them, as *Pope Syricus*, *Medina*, and others, urge it as an unanswerable Argument against the *Marriage of Priests*. But notwithstanding the great care the *Hea-*

then Priests took as to their *Chastity*, yet we find it signified but little; And therefore *Arnobius* describing the single life of *Priests* amongst the *Heathen*, saith, Where are Whoredoms more frequently committed than by *Priests*, even in their *Temples*, nay before the very *Altars*? And in the Conclusion he tells us, That their Lust was more frequently discharged in *Chancels*, than *Brothel-Houses*. But having shew'd this to be a Custom derived from the *Heathens*, and the effect it had; let us (now) see, whether the *Primitive Christians* had any such usage; and when, and by what means, it was at first introduced, and the Use that hath since been made of it. That there was no such Usage in the *Primitive Church*, is most certain, for *St. Ambrose* in his Comment on *2 Cor. 11.* testifies, that all the *Apostles*, except *St. John* and *St. Paul*, had Wives. And also *Eusebins*, *Ruffinus*, and *Socrates*, Ecclesiastical Writers of great Note, do all testify of several
very

very Religious Bishops, who had Children by their lawful Wives, after they were Bishops. And the *Greek Church* even to this day observes it for a Custom, not to admit any into *Holy Orders*, unless they were Married; as judging them then more stay'd, and less subject to Temptations. The first account we meet with of prohibiting Wives to the Clergy, was not long before the *Nicene Council*: A foolish Opinion had then seiz'd the Heads of some of the Leading Men of the Church, That no Married Man was fit to officiate at the Altar; Whereupon the Question came to be started in the *Council of Nice*; Of which matter the Ecclesiastical Historian *Socrates*, *Lib. 1. Cap. XI.* gives us this account, 'Εδύχετ τῷς Ἐπισκόποις &c. It pleas'd some of the Bishops to bring in a new Law into the Church, That those who were dedicated to the Holy Ministry, viz. Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, should not sleep any longer with their Wives. But this at first was
most

most strenuously oppos'd, and particularly by one *Paphnutius*, an *Egyptian* Bishop, who had formerly one of his Eyes pluckt out for the Testimony of the Blessed *Jesus*. Nor did this Doctrine advance it self into a *Decree*, till above fifty Years after, at which time *Siricius* Bishop of *Rome* first ordain'd it; though for many hundred Years after it was not much observ'd, till *Gregory* the Seventh, commonly call'd *Hildebrand*, began to put it in Execution; by excommunicating all such *Married Priests*, as would not immediately quit their Wives, and take the Oath of *Continency*. And this hath been strictly observ'd ever since; The *Council* of *Trent* having denounced an *Anathema* against all those who shall say, *That Clerks in Holy Orders may contract Matrimony; And that such a contract is valid, notwithstanding the Laws and Constitutions of the Church.* But how little this *Romish Celibacy* signified amongst their *Priests*, as to the keeping them Chast, even their own *Historians*

storians can best inform us. *Matthew Paris* tells us, The Pope thought it almost a Miracle to hear a *Candidate* for a Bishoprick attested to be a *pure Virgin*; *Alvarus Pelagius*, a *Portugal Bishop*, in the 14th Century, in his known Book *De Planctu Ecclesiæ*, amongst other crying Sins of the *Roman Clergy* of his days, Laments in an especial manner their Incontinency, wishing that the *Spaniards* and *Regricolæ* especially, had never promis'd Continency: The Children of the *Clergy* being, in those Countrys, says he, more numerous than those of the *Laity*; and what is more detestable, for several Years together, from their Concubines beds they go straight to the Altar. And in another place, the very same Author complains of their debauching the Women, who came to Confession. *Alfonsus à Castro* tells us, That if they should attempt to conceal the Incontinency of the Clergy, their own Children would proclaim it. *Johannes Aventinus* affirms, that the Salacity of
of

of the *Priests* was so famous, that it was grown into a Proverb. *Robert Holkot*, who liv'd in the fourteenth Century, a Dominican by Profession, and born at *Northampton*, stiles the Priests of his days, Priests of *Priapus* and *Baalpheor*. *Johannes Gerson*, speaking of the Incontinency of the Priests, saith, That it was so rooted and Epidemical an Evil, that as things stood under the reign of *Celibacy*, if Priests were not allow'd the use of common Women they would (in several places) fall upon the Wives and Daughters of their Parishioners. Nay, even *Albertus Pighius* and *Dominicus Soto*, as stout Assertors as they were of the *Celibacy*, yet were so ingenuous as to confess the leudness it Occasions. Thus could I, from several other instances of the like Nature, drawn from their own Historians, dilate upon this Subject; As also, by adding the remarkable Instances of the great Incontinency, or the unchast *Celibate* of several of their *Popes* themselves; as of *Paul*
the

the Second, *Sixtus* the Fourth, *Inno-*
cent the Eighth, *Alexander* the Sixth,
Julius the Second, *Leo* the Tenth,
Paul the Third, *Julius* the Third, &c.
 But I forbear this, since raking of
 Dunghills is an Employment more fit
 for a *Scavenger* than a *Gentleman*.
 That so great Wickedness should
 ever be Practis'd amongst such as
 serve at the Altar, is indeed a thing
 much to be lamented; but that e-
 ver any Christian Church should al-
 low and approve of such Practices,
 is matter of Astonishment; And yet
 that the Church of *Rome* does so, is
 most clear, and manifest. Hence we
 find it was one of the *German Grievances*,
That such Priests as were dis-
pos'd to live Chastly, and abhorred this
Sin of Uncleanness, were compell'd to
take Dispensations to keep Concubines.
Nicolaus de Clemangis also makes the
 same sort of complaint; *What a strange*
thing is it, says he, That in several
Dioceses now a days the Rectors of Pa-
ishes bargain with their Bishops for
License to keep Concubines? That
 Great

Great Angelical Doctor of the Church of Rome, *Thomas Aquinas* (whether from his own Complexion, or no, I know not) seems to be so great a favourer of this Vice, that he argues for it in a pretty odd sort of a Manner, in his 4th Book *De Regimine Principum*; *Id facit in Mundo Meretrix*. &c. *A Whore in the World*, saith he, is as the Pump in a Ship, or a Privy in a Palace: Take these away, and all will be filled with stench and annoyance. Most Incomparable Divinity! Sure if this Rule be true, no place for sweetness can compare with *Rome*, where, by the best Computation, are reckon'd three Thousand Licensed Harlots, which pay an Annual Tribute to his Holiness. But to return to my Subject. Since it plainly appears, that this Doctrine of the *Celibacy* was never us'd, nor practis'd amongst the Christians of the Primitive Church, how came then this Innovation to be introduced into the Church of *Rome*? *Cui bono*, for what end and purpose hath it so many Ages

Ages been so very zealously asserted? *In promptu causa est*, the reason is very obvious, and a Man with half an Eye may see the Policy of it. This Doctrine then is maintained by the Policy of the *Court of Rome*, on purpose to make advantage of the Clergy, both while they live, and when they dye. Hence their great *Espencæus* crys out shame of that execrable Custom of indulging Concubinage to Professors of Chastity, at a set annual rate; assuring us, That amongst the vast numbers of Delinquents in this kind, few, or none, suffer any other Punishment than that of the Pocket. But besides this, 'tis of great advantage to his *Holiness*, to disengage the Clergy from all Civil Interests, and thus to make them wholly depend upon the *Court of Rome*; which is a thing could never be effected, so long as the Clergy gave hostages of their fidelity to the Civil Government, by the Interests of their Families and Children. And therefore this Invention

tion was cunningly enough contriv'd; That as the old *Roman* Soldiers were forbidden Marriage while they received pay, lest their Domestic Interests should abate their courage; So the *Celibacy* of the Clergy was strictly enjoyn'd, to make them more true and hearty to the Interests of the *Court* of *Rome*. And the vast advantages that accrue to his *Holiness* by this one Doctrine of the *Celibacy* of the Clergy, is scarce to be computed; since now the Church is the general Heir to all the Clergy.

Thus have I run over those five several Gainful Doctrines in the Church of *Rome*; whereby it is most manifest, That, let them pretend what they will, Grandure and Secular Interest is all they aim at; And therefore let us no longer wonder at this *Priest-Craft* of theirs, but rather conclude with that Ingenious *Cardinal*, who, when the People flockt about him, gave them his Benediction in these words, SI DECIPI VULT POPULUS, DECIPIATUR.

ESSAY

ESSAY II.

*The great mischief and prejudice of
LEARNING. And that a
Wise Man ought to be preferr'd be-
fore a Man of LEARNING.*

LEARNING does but serve to fill us full of Artificial Errors. That which we so much admire under the name of LEARNING, is only the knowing the fancies of particular Men, *Deliri veteris Meditantes somnia vana*, in effect but like Gossiping Women telling one another their Dreams. The Romans were so far from esteeming *Learning*, as an essential part of Wisdom, that with them the word *Scholar* was seldom us'd but by way of reproach. A Learned Man may not improperly be compared to *Æsop's Crow*, deckt with the Feathers that he had stoln from other Birds. He maketh (indeed) a great shew in the World, but he may thank others who are at the charge of it.

D

In

In a word, There is not a simpler Animal, and a more superfluous Member of a State, than a meer Scholar; He is—— *Telluris inutile Pondus.*

And were I to give a description of a *Pedant* newly arrived from the *University*, I could not do it more to the life, than in the words of *Horace*;

*Cum septem Studiis annos dedit, insenu-
itque*

*Libris & curis, Statu taciturnius exit,
Plerumque & Populum risu quatit——*

No wonder then, that the *Italians*, in their *Farces*, always bring in a *Pedant* for the Fool of the Play. That Learning is no way serviceable to the life of Man, even daily experience sufficiently shews; for how many are there in the World, of high and low condition, that live pleasantly and happily, who never trouble themselves with Learning. Neither is it serviceable to Things Natural, which an ignorant *Sot* may as well perform, as he that is vested with the greatest Learn-

Learning; Nature is a sufficient Mistress for that. Nor doth it conduce to Honesty, and to make us better; *Paucis est opus literis ad bonam Mentem*, little Learning is requisite for a good Mind: Nay, some are of opinion, it rather hindreth it; And that where Learning and Knowledge go in the *Front*, Pride and Ambition always follow in the *Rear*. Hence it is observ'd, That *Rome* for the first five hundred Years, when it Flourish'd in Virtue and Valour, was without Knowledge; And so soon as *Learning* came amongst them, they then began to degenerate, and to run into Factions. The best Establish'd Government that ever was, and from whence have sprung the greatest Personages in the World, I mean the *Lacedemonian*, made no Profession of *Learning*; And yet it was the School of Virtue and Wisdom, and was ever Victorious over *Athens*, the most Learned City of the World, the School of all Science, the Habitation of the Muses, and

the Storehouse of Philosophers. *Learning* then serves for nothing, but to invent Niceties and Subtilties, artificial cunning Devices, and whatsoever is an Enemy to Virtue and Innocence. Atheism, Errors, Sects, and all the troubles of the World, have risen from the Men of *Knowledge* and *Learning*. If we search into the *Morals* of the most Learned amongst the *Heathens*, I mean their Philosophers, we shall find but little agreement betwixt their Practices and their Doctrines; And that the one did generally run counter to the other. *Plutarch* tells us, That not only *Socrates* and *Plato*, but also that the rest of the Philosophers, notwithstanding their outward shew and ostentation of some Virtues, were generally as intemperate, incontinent, and wicked, as any common or ordinary Slave. But of all other prophane Authors, *Lucian* paints them in the most lively Colours. For in his *Dialogues* he bringeth in *Menippus* speaking of the Philosophers thus; *Because I was*
(saith

(saith he) *uncertain what Course of Life to hold, I thought good to go to the Philosophers, and to take their advice, that they might direct me therein; not considering, that, as the Proverb saith, I cast my self out of the Frying-Pan into the Fire; for I found amongst them all things more uncertain than amongst any sort of Men, insomuch that the Life of the veriest Idiot, seem'd unto me more happy than theirs. For when I beheld their Lives, I perceiv'd they were clean Contrary to their own Precepts and Doctrine; those who taught that Money and Riches were to be condemn'd, did gape after nothing more than Gain, lending to Usury, teaching for Hire, and doing all for Money; Those who in words seem'd most to condemn Glory, referr'd the whole Course of their Lives thereto; And to conclude, Those who openly spoke most against Voluptuousness and Pleasure, secretly sought and embraced nothing else. Thus (we see) the Practices of Men do not alway hold an equal pace to their Theory—Video meliora, prob-*

que, Deteriora sequor. We naturally know what is Good, but naturally pursue what is Evil. *Probitas laudatur, at Alget*—All men are so just to Virtue as to commend her, but few are so just to themselves as to Practise her. But to return to my Subject. If we look back into the first Ages of the Church, we shall find that Philosophy was the chief Seminary of the main Errors broach'd in those times. And this (no doubt) *Tertullian* was highly sensible of, which made him style the Philosophers, *the Patriarchs of Hereticks*: And *Cornelius Agrippa* says, That nothing more adulterates Divinity than Philosophy, forasmuch as all Heresie whatsoever hath had its first rise out of the Fountain of Philosophy. The Primitive Fathers of the Church, were wont to apply themselves with great diligence to the study of Heathen Philosophy, on purpose to enable them to fight the Heathens with their own Weapons, and to Baffle them with their own Arguments.

Hence

Hence they chiefly consulted the Philosophy of *Aristotle* and *Plato*; but chiefly *Plato's*; Because that seem'd to speak plainer about the Divine Nature; and also, because the sweetness, and powerfulness of *Plato's* Writings, taught them at the same time the Art of Speaking, and the Strength of Reasoning. Having thus provided themselves against their Adversaries, they easily got the Victory over them: For tho' the *Heathens*, for so many hundred Years, had very zealously asserted the truth of their several Religions; yet now their Philosophers were so baffl'd by these Christian Doctors, that they had nothing to say; and at last were so ingenious, as to confess the ridiculousness of their Religions, and to own the purity, and reasonableness of the Christian Worship. And now, after so good a Beginning, who could expect so unhappy a Conclusion? For it so fell out, That the Christians having had such good success against the Religi-

ons of the Heathens, by their own Weapons ; instead of laying them down when they had done, unfortunately fell to manage them one against another. So many subtile brains having been set on work, and heated against a Foreign Enemy; when that was over, and they had nothing else to do, (like an Army that returns Victorious, and is not presently disbanded) they began to spoil and quarrel amongst themselves. Hence that Religion, which at first appear'd so innocent and peaceable, and fitted for the benefit of Humane Society, was miserably divided into a thousand intricate Questions, which neither advance true Piety, nor good Manners. And from hence sprung up the first Heresies in the Church. And thus we see how little Religion is promoted, or advantag'd by any assistance of Humane Learning, which the Apostle sufficiently inculcates, when he so wisely advises us, *To avoid all vain Philosophy.* And as Learning is of little use in making
Men

Men truly Religious ; so it likewise signifies but little in making us either good Subjects, or great Politicians: *Licinius*, and *Valentinian*, Emperours of *Rome*, were wont to say, That their State had no Poyson more dangerous, than that of Learning. *Lycurgus* also seem'd to be of the same opinion, when he Establish'd Ignorance in his Republick. Most Men do attribute the greatness of the *Grand Seignior's*, and the *Duke of Muscovy's* Power over their Subjects, to this one single piece of Policy, viz. their suppressing of Literature. And do we not see here in *England*, That in time of Popery, when that little stock of Learning that was amongst us, was cloyster'd up in Monasteries and Abbeyes, the ignorant Common People patiently crouch'd, and readily bore whatsoever burthen was put upon them. But as soon as ever Learning peept abroad in the World, and began to diffuse it self amongst the Vulgar; they then began to expostulate with their Superiours,

riours, and immediately threw off that Yoak, which formerly they and their Forefathers had so long lain under. And indeed, upon this consideration it is, that Princes take so much care to keep their Subjects in Ignorance, by suppressing all such Books, as lay open and prostitute the *Arcana Imperii* to the Knowledge of the Vulgar. For Books give Men new Hints and Notions, and those Notions do often put Men upon such Actions, as are not always agreeable to the Interests of Princes. Hence that Subtle, and Crafty Prince, King James, (I mean the First, not the Second) would often say, *That of all sorts of Subjects the Thinking Man made the worst.* And even by daily Experience we find it confirm'd, that the High-flown Arbitrary Men (commonly the Darlings of Tyrants) are not Men of the deepest Thoughts, nor of the greatest Foresight and Consideration; since if they were; they might easily discover, That the absolute Power of the Prince, cannot

not be made up of any other Ingredient, than the Slavery of the Subject. But even in some tempers there is such a Natural love to Servitude and Vassallage, that they think no pleasure comparable to the hugging of their Chain; And with the Slavish *French Man*, their greatest Glory is, *Notre Roy est Absolu*, the Grammatical Construction whereof is, *We are Slaves*. But that ever any, who call themselves *English-Men*, should sink into such a meanness of Spirit, so degenerating from the Virtues of their Ancestors, (many of whom lost their Lives in the generous Asserting of the *English Liberties*) is that, which as our Forefathers could never have dreamt of, so, for the Honour of the present Age, I hope, Posterity will never Remember. But Monsters are the Product of every Age; And there is no Climate without some Insects. Though Liberty be the Mistress of all Generous Souls, and is that alone which gives a Relish to Humane Life; yet

I

I say, there hath been lately found amongst us a sort of *Animals*, who have been as Industrious in giving up, as ever our Noble Progenitors were in Establishing our Liberties. But whatsoever Charms, these the more Gross, and Earthly part of Mankind, may think there is in such a Lazy, Slavish Subjection, yet to Men of more refined Intellectuals, and whose Veins run with a Nobler sort of Blood, all that the World can give without Liberty hath no taste. It must be confess'd, That in the two last Reigns, this Precious Jewel of Liberty hath been little valued; Nothing hath been sold so Cheap by unthinking Men; But alas that doth no more lessen the real value of it, than the ignorance of the Foolish *Indians*, did that of their *Gold*, which at first they Exchang'd for the most inconsiderable Bawbles. 'Tis the happiness of our Constitution, That *King* and *People* are both Bounded; And Curst be the Man, who shall go about to remove either of these

Land Marks:

Land-Marks : The *Crown* hath *Prerogative* enough to protect our *Liberties* ; And the *People* have so much *Liberty* as is necessary to make them useful to the *Crown* : So that the King's *Prerogative*, and the *Subjects* *Liberty*, do naturally tend to the preserving of one another. It was the Observation of that Learned *Attorney General*, Sir Francis Bacon, *That whilst the Prerogative runs within its Ancient and Proper Banks, the main Channel thereof is so much the Stronger, for Over-flows evermore hurt the River.* Certainly it was no ill saying of *Pliny* the Younger, to the Emperour *Trajan*, *Fælicitatis est posse quantum velis, Magnitudinis velle quantum possis,* It is an happiness for your Majesty to be able to do what you will, But your Greatness consists in doing what you justly may. And *Comines* (that honest *French States-Man*) notes, That it is more Honourable for a King to say, *Jay des Subjects si bons & Loyaux,* &c. My Subjects are so good and Loyal as to deny

deny me nothing, than to say, *I take what I please, and I will keep it.* And those Courtiers (adds he) that Preach any other Doctrine, do not a little mistake the Interest of their Masters, and are so far from exalting their Grandure and Prerogative, that they make them indeed no Kings. For as *Bracton* says, *Non est Rex ubi dominatur Voluntas*, It is not a King where Will and Pleasure bears sway; but rather some Cyclopick Monster, which eats and drinks the Flesh and Blood of Mankind. Nay, even King James the first (that high Asserter of Prerogative) in his Speech in the Star-Chamber, Anno 1609. saith, That no sooner does a King give over Governing according to Law, but he Ceases to be a King, and degenerates into a Tyrant. And the Lord Chancellor *Bacon* tells us, *That the People of this Kingdom love the Laws thereof, and nothing will oblige them more, than a Confidence of the Free Enjoying them. What the Nobles of this Land upon an occasion once said, NO LVMVS LEGES*

*LEGES ANGLIÆ MUTA-
RI*, We will not have the Laws of
England alter'd, *is imprinted upon the
Hearts of all English Men, who take
themselves to have as good a Title to
their Laws, as to the Common Air
they breath in.* And therefore Sir
Walter Raleigh (a man of no Vul-
gar Observations) tells us a great
Thing, and in no wise to be slighted,
*That the Kings of England have ever-
more sustained more loss by one Rebel-
lion, than by a hundred years Obser-
vance of MAGNA CHARTA.*
'Tis observed of the *Camel*, that it
lies quietly down till it hath its full
Load, and then riseth up, but the
English Mobile is a kind of *Beast*,
which riseth up soonest when it is
over-loaden; And therefore (to con-
clude this Point) as an *English Mo-
narch* may (so long as he observes the
Laws) be the happiest Prince in the
World; So if he will turn *Phaeton*,
and drive furiously, he will in the
end find himself a King not of *Men*,
but of *Devils*. But to proceed. That
Men

Men of Learning are not always the greatest Politicians, even the Experience of all Ages does sufficiently shew. That great and Learned Antiquary, Mr. *Selden*, informs us, That when *Constantine* became *Christian*, He had so great an Affection for the *Clergy*, that he put great part of the Civil Government into their hands: But after 3 or 4 years Experience, he was very sensible how fatal this Error had like to have been; Whereupon he took new Measures; and in the Posts of these unhappy Politicians, he was fain to put in a Set of Lay-Men, who having truer and better Notions of Government, soon corrected, and amended their Errors and Mistakes. That the *Clergy* of *England* have since the Reformation been much abridg'd of their former Power, is what I think every Man will grant. And therefore that such of them as love to be Great and Powerful, have still a hankering after that old Constitution, I for my part cannot so much admire.

mire. But how comes it, that the *Clergy* are not now allow'd to have as great Power, as in times of Popery? The Reason is very apparent; Because we found by Experience, That when they were vested with such great Power, no sort of Men ever carried it more Arbitrarily, and Tyranically, nor (indeed) committed greater Solecisms in Politicks than they did: And therefore the History of those times does sufficiently warn us against running into the same Error. When men act out of their own Sphere, who can expect any good will come of it? And therefore we find it seldom happens, That the Statesmen are more fortunate in meddling with Religion, than the Churchmen with State affairs; Each mars all with tampering out of their Provinces. Christ's Kingdom is not of this World; Nor ought the Divines *πραγματεύειν*, to meddle in this Political Province; And when they do, no sort of Men prove so unfortunate. Let us hear

E

what

what the ingenious *Andrew Marvel*, says as to this Point. *Whether it be, that the Clergy are not so well fitted by Education, as others for Political Affairs, I know not; though I should rather think (said he) they have advantage above others, and if they would but keep to their Bibles, might make the best Ministers of State in the World; let 'tis generally observ'd, that things miscarry under their Government. If there be any Counsel more precipitate, more violent, more rigorous, more extream than others, that is theirs. Truly I think, the reason God does not Bless them in Affairs of State, is because he never intended them for that Employment. Or if Government, and the Preaching of the Gospel, may well concur in the same Person, God therefore frustrates him, because, though knowing better, he seeks and manages his Greatness by the lesser and meaner Maxims. Upon these therefore, and such like Considerations, the wise *Venetians* have formed an Opinion of the Politicks of their*

their Church-Men, that whenever any thing that is of a considerable nature, occurs to be debated in the Senate, before any Suffrage passeth, they cause Proclamation to be made, for all Priests to depart; and the proper Officer, with a loud and audible Voice, pronounceth these words, *Fuora I Preti, Out Priests.* And it is further remarkable, That he who in this Common-wealth is called the *Divine of the State* (an Ecclesiastical Person to be advised with in matters of Religion) is commonly chosen such a One, as is reputed the least addicted to Bigottry. That no sort of Men have prov'd more fatal in their Counsels to Princes, than the Political Divines, is a truth too much confirm'd by Experience to be deny'd. That which these Men chiefly aim at, is to render themselves acceptable at Court; as knowing, that the best Preferments come from thence; And therefore if they can but sooth and please the Prince, they value not whether their Do-

ctrine be true, or false. Hence then their chief business is to give a helping hand towards making the Prince Arbitrary: And their way to do this, is by entitling him to all those *Regalia's* or *Prerogatives*, that the Kings of *Juda*, or *Israel*, ever enjoy'd or usurp'd; as if the *Judicials* of *Moses* were calculated for all Seasons, and all Meridians. And thus arose that Doctrine, *That Monarchy is Jure Divino*. But this way of proceeding is no new Invention, for we find it very usual amongst the Ancient *Heathens*, whenever they had a mind to obtrude any odd Belief upon the Common People, they presently trumpet up a *Jus Divinum*; and after this manner we see both their Laws and Religions were establisht. Thus *Solon's* Laws were said to come from *Minerva*; *Lycurgus* derived his Laws from *Jupiter*; *Numa Pompilius*, the first Founder of the *Roman* Rites and Ceremonies, declar'd he received them from the Goddess *Ægeria*; and *Mahomet* pretended his Religion was imparted

parted to him, by the Angel *Gabriel*. There is not any thing whatsoever, that derives so great an Authority amongst Men, as the opinion of Divine Favour, or Heavenly Designation: And therefore *St. Austine*, speaking of that Custome amongst the *Heathen*, of deriving the Pedigree of their *Heroes* from the Gods, says, That he lookt upon it to be of great use; in as much as it made valiant Men, fancying themselves to be Heaven-born, upon the confidence thereof, to undertake high attempts the more boldly, intend them the more earnestly, and accomplish them the more successfully. And *Ludovicus Vives* says, That another great advantage which accrued to the *Heroes* by this Belief, was the readiness which hereupon they found in the common People to submit to whatsoever they commanded, as thinking their very Commands to be Sacred, and Divine. This therefore made *Scipio*, that he cultivated and improv'd that opinion of the People, viz.

That he was begot by some God; and *Alexander* in *Lucian* tells us, That it further'd him in many great designs, to be accounted the Son of *Jupiter Hammon*; for hereby he was fear'd, and none durst oppose him, whom they held to be a *God*. Thus we see, that that piece of Policy, which many of our Court-Flatterers in the late Reigns have been so fond of, *viz.* Their asserting Monarchy to be *Jure Divino*, is but borrow'd from this old *Heathen* Custom; the Original design whereof was, first to flatter the Prince, by making him believe his Power was absolute, and his Will was uncontrollable; and then to impose upon the People, by making them believe, That a Prince (though a Tyrant, and the very worst of Men) was not to be oppos'd or resisted. But from what I have now said, let no Man think I am an Enemy to Monarchy; for I do most Solemnly, and Unfeignedly declare, That of all sorts of Governments, Monarchy is the most agreeable to my

my Genius; and that of Monarchies, the pure and unmixt would please me best (it being that by which the Almighty governs the Universe) could Humane Nature be long trusted with it; and could we be as certain, that his Vicegerent on Earth would as easily imitate those Divine Attributes of Wisdom and Goodness, as they are prone to lay claim to his other Attribute of Power and Greatness. But alas, Kings are but Men; they are not exempted from Error; They have their Vices and Infirmities, their Sallies and Enormities, like the rest of Mankind: And indeed, considering the unhappiness of their Education, and their being continually surrounded with Sycophants and Flatterers, 'tis a wonder they prove at the common rate of other Men. Hence therefore that great Man of Wisdom and Experience, *Philip de Comines* tells us, *That a Vertuous Prince is worthy of more than ordinary applause.* Thus (as a late ingenious Author observes) the fault is not in the

*Government as Absolute, but in Humane Nature, which is not often found sufficient, at least for above one or two Successions, to support and manage so unlimited a Power in one single Person, as it ought to be. And now, to return to my Subject. Since Learning therefore is a thing of so little value, and use to Mankind, as we have made it appear to be: how vain are those, who extol it to such a degree, as to make it the Standard both of Happiness and Wisdom; by concluding, that no Man can be either Happy, or Wise without it: Though the Scripture tells us, That he who encreaseth in Knowledge, encreaseth in Sorrow; and daily Experience shews us, That folly and Learning do often Cohabit in the same Person. The ingenious Montaigne, enquiring into the reason, why Men of Learning do generally seem to be more uncouth in their Discourse, as also more unfit for business than other Men, saith, *I cannot conceive the true Cause hereof, unless**

unless it be, that as *Plants* are choakt by over-much *Moisture*, and *Lamps* are stifled with too much *Oile*; So are the *Actions* of the mind overwhelm'd by over-abundance of matter and *Study*: And in a diversity of *Things*, as in a mist, the *Mind* is apt to lose it self. Thus we see that *Learning* is so far from contributing to *Wisdom*, that if it be not well manag'd, it really hinders us in the pursuit of it. And a great part of that which we call *Learning*, is like *Cobwebs*, which though they seem fine and artificial, are of no manner of use. For what is a Man the wiser for knowing the *Genitive Case* in *Jupiter*? Or whether we should write *Fælix*, or *Felix*; or what are we the better for knowing how many knots there were in *Hercules's Club*; or whether *Penelope* was honest or no? And yet as ridiculous as these things are, Many of those Men, whom the World hath call'd *Learned*, have trifled away their time in these, and such like *Enquiries*. In a word, it is not
the

the knowing much, but the knowing what is useful, makes a Man a Wise Man. And therefore if a Man have all other Points of Knowledge and Learning, yet if he wants that one of *Sibi Sapere*, all his other Knowledge is but Impertinence, and a gawdy sort of Ignorance. There are indeed some Men, who are arriv'd to a sort of *Lip-Wisdom*, as I may so call it; who have a knack of talking like Wise Men: By their Discourse you would judge of them, as the Ancient *Heathens* did of their *Heroes*, That they were sprung from the Gods; But if you search into their Actions, you would rather think them a-kin to the Horse or Mule which have no understanding. *Odi Homines ignavos operâ, Philosophos sententiâ*, was the saying of a Great Man; *I hate Men that Act like Fools, but speak like Philosophers*. He who speaks, but does not Act like a Wise Man, is at best but like a *Tinkling Cymbal*, which makes only a pleasant noise. Certainly of
all

all parts of Wisdom, the Practick is the best. To conclude then, It is not a Man's cloistering himself up in his Study, nor his continual Porring upon Books, that makes him a Wise Man: No; this property is to be acquired only by Meditation and Converse. For Reading may very properly be compared to Eating, and Meditating to Digesting; as therefore to one huor Eating, we allow many hours for Digesting; So to one hours Reading we should assign a sufficient time for Meditating, and Digesting what we have read. Or else, as the one by breeding ill humours, and obstructing the passages, impairs the Health of the Body; So will the other be of no less prejudice to the understanding, by occasioning Diseases to the mind. Thus do many Men, through their not observing this Rule, instead of improving, really impair themselves by their Studies. For by over-much Reading they clog and oppress their Minds, and so digest nothing. They
 stuff

stuff themselves so full of other Mens Notions, that there is no room for their Faculties to display themselves. Whereas the Man of Thought and Meditation, moves in a larger Sphere; He does not thus pinion his Fancy, but puts it upon the Wing, which seldom returns home without some noble Quarry. And did Men but know, how much the pleasure of Thinking transcends all other pleasures, they would certainly put a greater value upon it. For nothing is comparable to the pleasure of an active, and a prevailing Thought: a Thought prevailing over the difficulty and obscurity of the Object, and refreshing the Soul with new Discoveries, and Images of things, and thereby extending the bounds of Apprehension, and (as it were) enlarging the Territories of Reason. But the Learned Man that daily plods on in his Reading, and that never makes use of this thinking Faculty, by reflecting upon what he hath read, quite loseth this *Intellectual*

lectual Enjoyments ; Nor is he sensible of that *Suavissima Vita*, as the Poet calls it, of *Descending into himself*, and being daily sensible of his own Improvement : But like the Carriers Horse, he still keeps the old Track ; and his Learning (to continue the Simile) like the Pack is but a Burthen to the Beast that carries it. But now, after all that hath been said against Learning, thus much I must own, and acknowledge, That Learning when it meets with an ingenuous temper, and is joyn'd to a pregnancy of mind, is then of excellent use and Advantage : For there is no Man but will speak the better, where he knows what others have said upon the same subject. And sometimes the Conscience of his inward knowledge, gives a graceful Confidence to his outward behaviour. But on the other hand, if Learning happens to be in the possession of a Fool, 'tis then but a Bawble, and, like Dr. Donne's *Sun-Dial in the Grave*, a trifle, and of no use.

ESSAY III.

Of Education, and Custome; The great Influence it hath upon most Men. But that a good Education is not always Effectual.

WE suck in the first Rudiments as we do the common Air [*facili haustu*] as the Lord Bacon expresseth it, *without Discrimination or Election*, of which indeed our tender, and unexercised Minds are not capable. And, I confess, 'tis necessary we should do so; nor were there any hurt in this innocent easiness, did not most Men *all their Lives* worship the *first* thing they saw in the *Morning* of their Days, and ever after obstinately adhere to those unexamined Receptions. But this is the mischief, when we are Children we are apt to believe every thing; and when we are grown Men, we seldom examine Things, but settle in their *first Impressions*, without giving
our

our selves the trouble to consider, and review them. And these prejudices, by Custom and long Acquaintance with our Souls, get a mighty Interest, and shut them up against every thing that is different from those Images of Education.

*Quò semel est imbuta recens, servabit
odorem
Testa diu*——

said the Heathen Poet; the first seasoning Principles and Prejudices, which we receive in our Youth, stick closely to us for a long time after. The Wise Philosopher tells us, That the Soul of Man is *Rasa Tabula*, like a white Sheet of Paper, out of which therefore it must be more than common Art, that can so clear take out the first Writing, as to super-induce a new Copy fair and legible. This is the true reason why any Person finds it so difficult to quit those Notions of Religion, which have been established in his mind from

from his early Infancy. There is a marvellous agreement, and natural kindness to those Opinions, which we suck in with our Milk ; They are like *Foster-Brothers*, to whom it has been observed, There is as strong an Inclination as to the *Natural* ; we play and converse with them from our *Cradles*, and as soon as we can go alone, we take them by the *hand* ; we sleep with them in our bosoms, and contract an insensible *Friendship* with them, a pleasing *Familiarity*, which takes off all Deformities ; we love them, and we like them, and their very *Blackness* is a *Beauty*, as it is with the *African Nations*, to whom even that which we judge Deformity, appears more lovely than the most delicate *European Beauty*. Thus it was truly said of *Philo*, *That every Man's own Religion seem'd to him the best, because he judgeth of it not by reason, but by affection* ; like those Philosophers, of whom *Cicero* spake, who liked no Discipline but their own. Hence we find

and, that the best account many can give of their Faith, is, that they were bred in it ; And the most are driven to their Religion by Custom and Education, as the *Indians* are to Baptism, that is, like a Drove of Cattle to the Water. Thus do we judge all things by our anticipations, and condemn, or applaud them, as they differ, or agree, with our first opinions. 'Tis on this account that almost every Country censures the Laws, Customs, and Doctrines of every other, as absurd, and unreasonable, and are confirmed in their own follies beyond possibility of Conviction. In a word, there is nothing so absurd, to which Education cannot form our tender Youth ; It can turn us into shapes more Monstrous than those of *Africk*. For in our Childhood, we are like the melted Wax to the prepared Seal, capable of any Impression from the documents of our Teachers. The *Half-Moon*, or *Cross*, are indifferent to us ; and with the same ease can we write

on this *Rasa Tabula*, Turk or Christian. Hence therefore it is, That we find no Religion so irrational, but can boast of its Martyrs ; Nor no Opinion so silly and ridiculous, but has had some Philosopher or other to support and defend it. And because there is not any thing more strange, than the great diversity of Laws and Customs in the World ; I shall not here think it impertinent to transcribe some of those which are most remarkable ; as for Instance, To account it a most pious and Religious Act, to kill their Parents, when they come to such an Age ; and then to eat them : In one and the same Nation Virgins go with their Privy Parts uncovered, and married Women carefully cover and conceal them : Where Children are excluded and Brothers and Nephews only inherit : Where Chastity, in unmarried Women, is in no esteem ; for such may prostitute themselves to as many as they please, and being got with Child, may lawfully take Physick

sick to make themselves miscarry ;
 but Married Women keep themselves
 Chast and Faithful to their Husbands.
 Where the Custom was, that every
 Bride should be prostitute to all Com-
 ers the first Night, and she who had
 entertain'd most, was most honour-
 ed : Where they have no Marriages,
 and therefore Children only own
 their Mothers, not being able to
 guess at their Fathers : Where Baw-
 dy Houses of Young Men are kept
 for the Pleasure of Women, as there
 are of Women for the Necessities of
 Men : Where the servile condition
 of Women is look'd upon with such
 contempt, that they kill all the Na-
 tive Women, and buy Wives of their
 Neighbours to supply their use :
 Where they boil the bodies of their
 Dead, and afterwards pound them
 to a pulpe, which they mix with
 their Wine, and drink it : Where
 the greatest Oath they take, is to
 Swear by the Name of some Dead
 Person of Reputation, laying their
 hand upon his Tomb : Where the

ordinary way of Salutation is, by putting a finger down to the Earth, and then pointing it up towards Heaven: Where it is the Fashion to turn their backs upon him they salute, and never look upon the Man they intend to honour: Where, whenever the King spits, the greatest Ladies of his Court put out their hands to receive it: And where also the most eminent Persons about him stoop to take up his Ordure in a Linnen Cloth. Thus have I Collected, and Copied out several of those Customs, which to me seem the most extravagant, and uncouth; whereby it plainly appears, that there is no Opinion or Imagination so idle or ridiculous, which is not established by Laws and Customs, in some place or other. Thus, in a word, do we see the mighty power of Custom and Education; which is so great, that the rankest follies are counted Sacred, if Customary: And the Fashion is always handsom and agreeable, though never so uncouth,
or

or ridiculous to an indifferent Beholder. In short, we are civil or uncivil, good or bad, foolish or wise, or any thing else according to Custom, which *Erasmus* calls the *Monosyllable Tyrant*, because 'tis form'd *Mos* in Latine; though *Pinder* stiles her the *Queen and Empress of the World*. *Seneca* says, That we govern our selves not by Reason, but by Custom, accounting that most honest, which is most practis'd; and Errour serves us for a Law, when it is become publick. Custom we know is of so great account among *Physicians*, that according to the great *Hippocrates*, there is no one thing ought more to be regarded: Nay, says he, whatsoever a Man is us'd to (altho' it be bad) is less harmful than what we are not accustomed to, although in it self it be better. And among the Lawyers we see, there is nothing more esteemed of than Custom: Prescription is always counted the best Title; and the Common Law, which is nothing but several Customs estab-

F 3

lished

blished by time and experience, has always the preference of Statute-Law, and is esteem'd the Nobler part. Again, Custom governs our very Affections; and we love rather by Custom, than by Reason. Hence Mothers more tenderly effect their Children with whom they commonly converse, more than Fathers do; and Nurses more than some Mothers. Custom hath likewise such a Power over the Imagination, that when we are asleep, we often dream of those things, which our minds most run upon when we are awake. And what a mighty Influence has it upon the outward Sences? which may be perceived in those Persons, who (after they have been for some time kept in a dark place) come into a full and open light; not being able to bear that luminous Body, which by its glaring seems to dazle and offend their sight. And hence it is, That those who live near the *Cataracts* of *Nile*, as also those several Tradesmen whose noise displeases us
 so

so much, and who dwell in Mills and Forges, Custom has made it so familiar to them, that they are no ways disturbed with this constant clattering, but rest and sleep as quietly with noise, as others do without it. Thus doth Custom sufficiently shew its own Force and Power, which is stronger than Nature, inasmuch as it both alters and destroys Nature, and is so powerful that it cannot be destroyed but by it self. To conclude then, the Power of Custom is much greater than most men imagine ; and therefore it is, that through mistake we often call that the Law of Nature, which really is but the effect of Custom. That affection, which we say every Man naturally bears to his own Country, whence comes it ? Is it not from Custom ? I know indeed, some tell us, that this love to our Native Soil, is by the instinct of Nature, as Beasts love their Dens, and Birds their Nests. But I rather think it is from civil institution, as being accustomed to

the same Laws, the same Ceremonies, the same Temples, the same Markets, and the same Tribunals. No wonder then, that the Generality of Mankind is so influenced by Custom, since that Idea which most Men have of Truth and Reason, is no other, than what Custom dispenseth to them. And hence it is, that we often are so strangely deluded, and imposed upon. *For Custom, says Montaigne, veils from us the true aspect of things. Miracles appear to be so, according to our ignorance of Nature, and not according to the essence of Nature. The continually being accustomed to any thing, blinds the eye of our Judgment.* Hence therefore it is, That as the Greeks and Romans formerly called all Barbarians, who followed not their Laws and Fashions; so we still keep up the same humour, by judging all those who differ from us in their Customs and Usages, to be at least Ridiculous, if not Barbarous. Though (after all) the *Barbarians* are no more a wonder to us, than we are

to

to them; nor (it may be) with any more reason. Those *Americans*, who kill their old decrepit Parents, instead of believing themselves Parricides, call us Cruel for letting ours continue so long in the Miseries of old Age: And as for that Practice of theirs (which to us seems so unnatural) of eating their own Parents, they think they do thereby give them the most noble sort of *Sepulture*, by burying them in their own Bodies, in a manner reviving them again, and regenerating them by a kind of Transmutation into their Living Flesh, by the means of Digestion and Nourishment. And to say the Truth, there are many Laws and Customs, which seem at the first view to be savage, inhumane, and contrary to all Reason, which if they were without Passion, and soberly consider'd, though they were not found to be altogether just and good, yet at least they might be plausibly defended by some kind of Reason. A wise Man therefore ought to

to suspend his Judgement, and not to be over-forward in Censuring and Condemning the Practices and Customs of other Nations: which sort of narrowness I find many are subject to, and with the *Hermite*, are apt to think the *Sun* Shines no where, but in their *Cell*; and that all the World is darkness but themselves. But this certainly is to measure Truth by a wrong Standard, and to Circumscribe her by too narrow a Scantling. But to proceed, Since Custom hath so great a sway in all our Actions, we may well look upon it, as *another Nature*; nay, sometimes we see it Conquers Nature; Thus by Custom did *Mithridates* render Poyson so familiar to himself, that it lost its noxious Quality; and we find whole Nations in *India*, that live upon Toads, Lizards, and Spiders. Custom then is no slight thing; it is that which ought in the first place to be regarded, since it exercises so absolute dominion over us. *Plato* reproving a Boy for playing

ing

ing at some Childish Game, Thou reprovest me (says the Boy) for a very little thing: *Custom* (replyed *Plato*) is no little Thing. And (says *Montaigne*) He was in the right; for I find our greatest Vices derive their first Propensity from our most tender Infancy, and that our Principal Education depends upon the Nurse. And therefore since Education carries so great force and Authority along with it, how much does it behove such Parents, who have any regard to Vertue and Wisdom, to give their Children a vertuous and sober Education? though (indeed) this does not always prove successful. For *Nero*, notwithstanding his two excellent Tutors, *Seneca* and *Burrhas*, receiv'd but little Improvement. *Cicero's* Son to the stupidity of his Nature, added Drunkenness, and return'd from *Athens* and *Cratippus* as great a Blockhead as he went. *Marcus Aurelius* provided fourteen of the most approved Masters to Educate *Commodus*, yet could not rectifie his froward

froward and Barbarous humour. Thus, as Sir *Henry Wotton* observes, There is in some Tempers such a natural Barrenness, that like the Sands of *Arabia* they are never to be cultivated, or improved. And according to the old proverb, *Ex quovis ligno non fit Mercurius*——There are some Crab-Stocks of such a nature, that all the Ingrafting in the World can never correct or amend. But these Monsters of Nature are not often to be met with: For we usually observe, that the Culture of the mind, as of the Earth, doth deliver it from the Barrenness of its Nature; And that the toughest, and most unbended Natures, by early and prudent Discipline, may be much corrected and improved.

ESSAY

ESSAY IV.

*Of the Ancients: And the Respect
that is due unto them: That we
should not too much enslave our selves
to their Opinions.*

AS we should not be so fondly
conceited of our selves, and
the extraordinary Abilities of the
Present Age, as to think every thing
that is Ancient to be obsolete; or,
as if it must needs be with Opini-
ons, as it is with Cloaths, where the
newest is for the most part best;
so neither should we be so Supersti-
tiously devoted to Antiquity, as to
take every thing for *Canonical*, which
drops from the Pen of a Father, or
was approved by the consent of the
Ancients. Antiquity is ever vene-
rable, and justly challenges Honour,
and Reverence; but yet there is dif-
ference between Reverence, and Su-
perstition; We may assent unto them
as Ancients, but not as Oracles;
They

They may have our minds easie and inclinable, but there is no reason they should have them Captivated and Fetter'd to their Opinions. As I will not distrust all which without manifest Proof they deliver, where I cannot convince them of Error; so likewise will I suspend my Belief upon probability of their Mistakes; and Where I find reason to dissent, I will rather respect *Truth* than Authority. As there may be Friendship, so there may be Honour, with diversity of Opinions; nor are we bound therefore to despise Men, because we reverence them. We wrong our Ancestors more by admiring than opposing them in their Errours; and our opinion of them is very dishonourable, if we think they had rather have us followers, of them, than of Truth. The greatest respect we can shew the Ancients, is by following their Example: which was not *Supinely* and *Superstitiously* to sit down in fond admiration of the Learning of those that were before them;

them; but to examine their Writings, to avoid their Mistakes, and to use their Discoveries, in order to the further Improvement of Knowledge: This they did; and never any Man took a greater Liberty in censuring and reproving the supposed Errors and Mistakes of the Elder Philosophers, than *Aristotle* himself; And therefore I do not see any reason, why he should be allow'd greater privilege, than what he himself thought good to allow to those before him. *Veritas nec mea est, nec illius, aut ullius*, says *Saint Austine*, No man can say I am infallible; for as we are men, so we are subject to Error. As for the *Truth* of Things, Time makes no Alteration; Things are still the same they are, let the time be past, present, or to come. Those things which we Reverence for Antiquity, what were they at their first Birth? Were they false? Time cannot make them true: Were they true? Time cannot make them more true. The Circumstance therefore
of

of Time, in respect of Truth and Errour, is meerly impertinent. For as Antiquity cannot privilege an Error, so Novelty cannot prejudice Truth. I know in all Ages there have been those, who with a great deal of Zeal and Elegance have declaim'd against *New Things*, setting forth the great danger of *Alteration* and *Novelty*. But let us not be frightn'd with Shadows: If to be the Author of *New Things*, be a Crime; how will the first Civilizers of *Men*, and Makers of *Laws*, and Founders of *Governments* escape? Whatever now delights us in the Works of *Nature*, that excels the rudeness of the first Creation, is *New*. Whatever we see in Cities, or Houses, above the first Wildness of Fields, and Meanness of Cottages, and Nakedness of Men, had its time, when this imputation of *Novelty* might as well have been laid to its charge. It is not therefore an Offence, to introduce *New Things*, unless that which is introduced prove pernicious

in

in it self; or cannot be brought in, without the extirpation of others, that are better. If *Novelty* should always be rejected, neither would Arts have arrived to that perfection, wherein now we enjoy them, nor could we ever hope for any future Reformation: though all Truth be in it self Eternal; yet in respect of Mens Opinions, there is scarce any so Ancient, but had a beginning, and was once counted a *Novelty*; and if for this reason it had been condemned as an Error, what a general darkness and ignorance would then have been in the World, in Comparison of that Light which now abounds. The great Architect of the World hath been observ'd not to throw down all Gifts and Knowledge to Mankind confusedly at once, but in a regular Parsimonious method, to disperse them by certain degrees, periods, and progress of time, leaving Man to make industrious researches and investigations after Truth; *He left the World to the*
G Disputations

Disputations of Men, as the wisest of Men says, who in acquisition of Natural Truths went from the Hysope to the Cedar; *One day certifieth another*, and one Age rectifieth another, and the Morrow hath more Experience than the preceeding day. Those times which we term Vulgarly the Old World, was indeed the *Youth* of it, and though if respect be had to the particular and personal Acts of Generation, and to the relation of Father and Son, they who fore-liv'd and preceeded us may be called our *Ancestors*, yet if you go to the Age of the World in general, and to the true length and longævity of Things, we are more properly *The Ancients*, and the present Age is the greatest Antiquity: Hence, as the Lord Bacon observes, we generally have a wrong notion of *Antiquity*; For (says he) *to speak truly, Antiquitas Seculi, Juventus Mundi*; That which we commonly call *Antiquity*, is but the Nonage of the World: And in this respect the younger

younger Brother may be term'd more Ancient than his Elder, because the World was older when he entred into it. The admiring of former Ages, was a Vanity that possess'd all times as well as ours ; and the *Golden Age* was never *the present*. They who went before us, have not prevented us, but have opened a door, that we may enter into the Recesses of Truth : He that comes last hath certainly the best advantage in the Inquiry. Our Ancesters have done wisely and well in their Generations, but they have not done all ; much work still remains behind, and he that lives a thousand Ages hence, shall not have reason to complain, that there are no hidden Truths fit for him to enquire after. There are more Worlds to conquer : Every day brings a new Light, and by a wise and careful Labour we may improve what our Fore-Fathers spy'd, when they peep't through the Crevices. If the latter Ages could be abstracted from the mixtures of Interest,

terest, and the Engagement of their Party, they are in many things better able to teach the People, than the Ancients. There is certainly a truer, and more certain Knowledge of Things now than formerly: But that which spoils all is, Men are grown a great deal more cunning, and few there are, who take any other aim, than that of Interest; So that hence it is, that many times it proves safer to rely on the Authority of former Ages, though more ignorant, than of latter Ages, which though more knowing, yet more dangerous to follow, in respect of that Design and Artifice, which now a days Men use, on purpose to promote their own private Interest. In short, it behoves every one in the search of Truth, always to preserve a Philosophical liberty: Not to be so enslaved to the Opinion of any Man, as to think whatever he says to be infallible. We must labour to find out what things are in themselves by our own Experience,
and

and a through examination of their Natures, not what another says of them. *Non tam autoritas in disputando, quam rationis momenta quaerenda sunt*, said Cicero; A Man ought not so much to regard the Person who speaks, as the Thing that is spoken. But it is the unhappy humour of too many Men, *jurare in verba Magistri*, servilely to tye themselves to the Authority of particular Men, and to see with other Mens Spectacles: The greatest part of the World being rather led with the Names of their Masters, and with the Reverend respect they bear their Persons or Memories, than with the Soundness and Truth of the Things they teach. Men first take up a Confidence of the Learning or Sanctity of a Person, and then all his Notions are receiv'd implicitly, and are strictly embraced, without the least examination: And this Admiration of Mens Persons, has in all Ages been of huge mischief, and very pernicious; It has nurs'd up pri-

vate fancies into Solemn publick Errors, and given an unhappy Perpetuity to many Heterodox Opinions, which would else have expir'd with their first Defenders. Men do not any where more easily erre, than where they follow a Guide, whom they presume they may safely trust. Belief, without evidence of Reason, must be only there absolute, where the Authority is unquestionable; and where it is impossible to erre, there only it is impious to distrust. As for Mens Assertions, *Quibus possibile est subesse falsum*, what one said of Friendship, *Sic ama tanquam osurus*, Love with that Wisdom, as to remember you may be provoked to the Contrary, is more warrantable and advantagious in Knowledge, *Sic crede tanquam dissensurus*, so to believe, as to be ready, when Cause requires, to dissent. It is a too much straitning of a Man's own understanding, to enthrall it unto any; And besides, there is not any thing which hath bred more distempers in
the

the Body of Learning, than Factions and Sidings; when as *Seneca* said of *Cato*, That he would rather esteem Drunkenness a Virtue, than *Cato* Vicious. To conclude, There is no one thing hath more stunted the growth of Learning, than a stiff adhering to the dictates of the Ancients; For he who makes *Plato* or *Aristotle* the Standard of Humane Knowledge, cannot possibly transcend the Learning of *Plato* or *Aristotle*; the utmost he can do, he may come up to that height, but (like water) he can never rise higher than the Source. Now if we enquire the reason why the *Mathematicks*, and *Mechanick Arts*, have so much got the start in growth of other Sciences; this may very well be thought to be one considerable cause of it, That their Progress hath not been retarded by this Reverential awe of former Discoveries; Herein Men have acted freely, without laying any restraint upon themselves, or Embargo upon their Intellectuals:

No man ever thought it an Heresie to out-limn *Apelles*, or to out-work the *Obelisks*: It was never imputed to *Galilæus* as a Crime, That he saw further than the Ancients, and that he chose rather to believe his own Eyes, than either *Aristotle* or *Ptolomy*. Those famous *Optick Glasses*, which are now so serviceable to us, are not a jot the less valued, because they were not us'd by the Ancients; nor do we give the less credit to their Informations, because they were *hid from Ages*. The Polar Vertue of the *Loadstone*, was unknown to the Ancients; this was reserv'd for latter days; and yet no Man is so silly, to think the vast advantages, which accrue to Mankind by that noble Invention, are (therefore) the less to be esteem'd. And had the Author of that Invention (one *Flavius Goia*, a *Neapolitane*, who liv'd about three-hundred years ago) been of this narrow Principle, That we are not to transcend the *Bounds of the Ancients*; we must then
(for

(for want of this Discovery) have committed our selves to the sole conduct of the Stars; and (as the Ancients did) must we always have been creeping near the Shear: Then the fourth part of the Earth had been yet unknown, and *Hercules's Pillars* had still been the World's *Ne ultra*: *Seneca's* Prophecy had been an *unfulfilled* Prediction, and one moiety of our Globes an empty Hemisphere.

ESSAY V.

Whether the Men of this present Age are any way inferiour to those of former Ages, either in respect of Virtue, Learning, or long Life.

THAT the World doth daily decline, is an Opinion so *Universally* believ'd, that whoever goes about to defend the Contrary, presently shall be thought to maintain a Paradox. But that thing call'd *Universality*,

Universality, is so slight an Evidence of Truth, that even Truth it self is asham'd of it; For what is *Universality* but a quainter word to signify the *Multitude*: Now Humane Authority at the strongest is but weak, but the *Multitude* is the weakest part of Humane Authority: It is the great Patron of Error, the most easily abus'd, and the most hardly disabus'd. The beginning of Error may be, and generally is, from Private Persons, but the maintainer and Continuer of Error is the *Multitude*. To infer the truth of a Religion, from the Number of its Professors, is falsely to conclude the fineness of the Cloth from the largeness of the Measure. How vain and Ridiculous then is it in the *Papists*, who think this argument of *Universality*, so invincible a Proof of the truth of their Religion. If *Multitude* be an Argument that Men are in the right, in vain then hath the Scripture said, *Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do evil*: For if this Argument

Argument signifie any thing, the greater Number can never be in the wrong. Indeed could wishing do any good, I could wish well to this kind of Proof; *Sed nunquam ita bene erit rebus humanis, ut plures sint meliores*, It will never go so well with Mankind, that the *Most* shall be the *Best*. In short, the best that can be said of Argument and Reason drawn from *Universality* and *Multitude*, is this, such Reason may perhaps serve well to excuse an *Error*, but it can never serve to warrant a *Truth*. Notwithstanding therefore, that the opinion of the World's constant Declining is so firmly radicated in the minds of most Men, yet this is no sufficient reason, why we should acquiesce in such a belief; Nor can any thing be more unphilosophical, than an Implicite Faith in this matter. And therefore we shall now presume to enter upon the Subject. There are two extreams common amongst Men: the one proper to young Men, who always value themselves above their Predecessors,

Predecessors, and like *Rehoboam*, think their own little finger stronger than the whole Body of their Fathers; the other peculiar to Old Men, who always extol the time past above the present. *To speak impartially, Old Men, says Dr. Brown, from whom we should expect the greatest Example of Wisdom, do most exceed in this point of folly; Commending the days of their Youth, which they scarce remember, at least well understood not; extolling those times, which in their younger Tears they heard their Fathers condemn, and condemning those times, which the Gray Heads of their Posterity shall commend.* And that Old Men always were of this temper, we may understand from *Horace*, who makes the same Complaint of them. Now, the reason why Old Men are so much out of humour with the present times, I take to be this; They being for the most part much alter'd from what they were in their Youth, as to their temper and Complexion, and being full of sad Melancholly

Melancholly thoughts, this makes them think the World is chang'd, whereas in truth the Change is in themselves. It fares with them in this Case, as with those whose Mouth is out of tast, or whose Eyes are bloodshot, or are troubled with the Jaundise, the one imagining all things bitter or sour, which they tast, and the other red or yellow which they see.

Virg. Æn. 3. Terræq; Urbesque recedunt.

Themselves being launch'd out into the Deep, the Trees and Houses seem to go backward, whereas really the Motion is in themselves, the Houses and Trees still standing where they were. *Seneca* tells us a pleasant Story of *Harpaste* his Wife's Fool, who being all of a sudden struck blind, would by no means be perswaded of her own blindness, but still cry'd out how dark the Room was grown. Such for the most part is the Case of Old Men, who, by
reason

reason of the Infirmities of their Bodies and Minds, no longer finding the same gust and pleasure in the delights of the World, that they found in their Youth, lay the fault upon the World, instead of imputing the same to themselves, as they ought to do. For God creates not Souls now with ~~as~~ advantages than formerly; He is ~~as~~ liberal of his Favours to us of this Generation, as ever he was to any before us; And Nature being still as wise and powerful as heretofore, and the Universal Causes the same, their Operations must be likewise as perfect, and their Effects as excellent in these days, as they have been in any. Let not Men therefore deceive themselves, and think that we live in the Dregs of Time, and what mighty advantages the *Ancients* (as they call them) had over us; for if Antiquity be to have the preference, the advantage will then be of our side; For Antiquity consists in the old Age of the World, not in the youth of it. 'Tis we
are

are the Fathers, and of more Authority than former Ages; because we have the Advantage of more time than they had, and Truth (we say) is the Daughter of Time. And besides, our Minds are so far from being impair'd, that they improve more and more in acuteness; and being of the same Nature with those of the Ancients, have such an advantage beyond them, as a Pigmy hath upon the Shoulders of a Gyant; from whence he beholds not only as much, but more than his Supporter doth. But since the Question now to be handled, is rather of *Fact* than of *Right*, the best way of discussing it, will be by comparing the past Ages with the present, and that in these three Respects, of Vertue, Learning, and long Life.

1. First then, if we survey the Vices of former Times, they will certainly appear more Barbarous and Epidemical, than such as now Reign in the World. Even to this day, do we not esteem it an unparallell'd
piece

piece of wickedness, That no stranger could enter *Sodom*, without being defiled by the Lust of the more than brutish Citizens? A Crime so foul, that nothing but Fire and Brimstone could purge the stench of it from the World. After this, among the *Ægyptians* was that of the *Strawless Tax*. The *Græcians* under their wisest Lawgivers approv'd of Theft, if it were committed with Art and Cunning. And Drunkenness was so usual a Vice among them, that from thence *Pergræcari*, signifies *to be mad with Drink*. The *Romans* had two Rules of Drinking, which they commonly observ'd; The one was, to Drink down the Evening Star, and Drink up the Morning Star, *ad Diurnam stellam matutinam potantes*, saith *Plautus*; The other commonly practis'd among them, was the Drinking so many Healths, as there were Letters in their Mistresses Name, according to that of *Martial* :

Nævia

*Nævia sex Cyathis, septem Justina
bibatur,*

Quinque Lycas, Lyde quatuor, Ida tribus.

Nor were their very Women free from this excess; Nay, *Seneca* assures us, that even in Drinking, they sometimes out-did the Men. But to proceed. Have we any so vain as *Xerxes*, that would think to whip the Sea into Calmness? or so Prodigal as was *Alexander*, who, according to *Plutarch*, spent twelve Millions of Talents upon *Hephæstion's* Funeral? Such a prodigious Sum, that many question whether at that time the Revenue of the whole World would amount to it. Or, what Prince is there in these days so profusely extravagant, as *Heliogabalus*, the Emperour, who was possess'd rather with a Madness, than excess of Prodigality; he fill'd his Fish-Ponds with Rose-Water; he supplied his Lamps with the precious Balsam, that distils from the Trees in *Ara-*

H
bia;

bia ; he wore upon his Shoos Pearls and Precious Stones engraven by the hands of the most skilful Artists ; his Dining-Room was strew'd with Saffron, and his *Portico's* with the dust of Gold : And he was never known to put on any Garment a second time, whether it was of the richest Silk, or woven with Gold. Then as for the Cruelty of former Ages, we shall find it many degrees to transcend any thing that is done in these days ; even amongst the *Jews*, who by their Religion pretended to more preciseness, what more common amongst them, than Incest, Fratricide, Parricide, Sawing Men to Death, and the most Barbarous sorts of Cruelties, oftentimes committed only for the diversion, and entertainment of Princes ? What Action did ever carry in it so much of Inhumanity, as that of the thirty *Athenian Tyrants*, who caused the Daughters of some of the Slain Citizens to dance, in the Blood of their own Parents, who had newly been Murder'd

Murder'd by them? *Lucius Florus* tells us, that the *German Women*, in their Wars with the *Romans*, would very commonly take their Naked Sprawling Infants, and throw them in the face of those they fought with; thinking that so Inhumane a Spectacle might daunt the *Roman* Courage. Was there ever since then, any thing like the *Ten Persecutions*? What but *Nero's Luxury*, could ever compare with *Nero's Cruelty*? And yet *Domitian*, in one particular, outwent him; for he took delight in seeing those Torments executed, which *Nero* but commanded. What shall I now say of *Servius Galba*, who, when he was in *Spain*, having assembled together the Inhabitants of three Cities, to consult (as he pretended) about their common safety, at one stroke cut off seven thousand of them, among whom were the very Flower of their Youth? I might also tell you of *Licinius Lucullus*, who, contrary to express Articles, put to the Sword twenty thousand

of the *Caucaeï*, after they had surrender'd: And of *Octavianus Augustus*, who, after the taking of *Perusia*, at one Sacrifice offer'd up the lives of three hundred of the Principal Citizens at the Altar of his Uncle *Julius*: And of *Antoninus Caracalla*, who being incens'd against the Citizens of *Alexandria* upon the account of some jests they had made of him, entred into the City in a peaceable manner, and summoning before him all the Youth, he surrounded them with his Souldiers, who, upon the Signal given, fell immediately upon them, and slew every Mothers Son of them; and afterwards using the like Cruelty upon the rest of the Inhabitants, he utterly destroy'd that most Spacious, and Populous City of *Alexandria*. Thus could I easily give many more instances, to shew the wickedness of former Ages, not only in respect of their Barbarous Cruelties, but of their other Vices; but I forbear this, since I very well know, that the Character of those Times cannot

cannot be better described, than is already by the *Apostles*, in their several *Epistles*: For what a Monstrous Catalogue of Sins do we meet with in the first Chapter to the *Romans*; Sins of so deep a dye, and of so horrid a nature, and such an Inventory of all sorts of Wickedness, That one might very well imagine the Apostle had been rather describing some *Vision of Hell*, than the *Seat of the Roman Empire*. To conclude then this Point, let us not imagine that ever any Age was, or will be free from Vice and Enormities; while Humane Nature continues, there will be Frailties: *Vitia erunt donec Homines erunt*, saith *Tacitus*, Vice hath always had a being in the World, and will continue as long as Men are upon Earth. How unreasonable is it, to think that *Men* can be better out of *Paradise*, than he was in it? *Nemo sine Crimine*, The best of Men have their Imperfections. We are no Angels upon Earth, but are always transported with some In-

firmity or other; and 'twill be so, while these frail, fluxible humours reign within us. This as I conceive is that *Black Bean*, which the *Turkish Alchoran* speaks of, when they feign, That *Mahomet* being asleep among the Mountains of the Moon, two Angels descended, and ripping open his Breast, they took his Heart, and wash'd it in Snow, and afterwards pull'd out a *Black Bean*, which was the portion of the Devil, and so replaced the Heart. All things here below run in a kind of Circle; And as in Arts and Sciences, so likewise in the Manners of Men there is a Vicissitude and Revolution. Virtue and Vice have no settled Habitation; every Climate hath had its turn: Sometimes one Countrey carries it for Vertue and Learning, and sometimes another. *Athens*, which was formerly the only place for Learning and Civility, is now quite over-run with Barbarism and Ignorance. Every Nation hath its *Achme*, or highest pitch of Elevation; And when

when once the spoke of the Wheel is uppermost, it soon whurries to the bottom. As a Kingdom rises in Empire, so it enlarges both in Vertue and Vice; and when it declines, so the Declension of these is proportionable. And though as to particular Kingdoms, one time may be either better or worse than another; yet take the World in Gross, and lump it together, we shall find that Humane Nature is much at the same Standard, as it was formerly; And as we commonly observe of the Sea, That as it gets in one place, it loses in another; so every Age may make the same Observation of the Vertues and Vices of Mankind.

2. The next thing to be consider'd, is, whether former Ages excell'd the Present in respect of Learning. Of all the Ancients there were none more esteem'd for Learning than the *Ægyptians*: The old *Ægyptian* Learning was so Famous, that the Spirit of God, sets forth the E-

minency of *Moses's* Knowledge by his skill in it, and the Matchlessnes of *Solomon's* Wisdom by its exceeding it; And therefore we may very well conclude, that the *Ægyptian* Learning in those days, was conversant about more generous and more useful Notices, than afterwards; such as *Geometry*, *Astronomy*, *Policy*, *Philosophick*, and other such like Arts, which either were perfective of their Rational Faculties, or did Minister to the Uses and Necessities of Nature: as is generally reported by all Ancient Historians. But had the old Primitive Learning of *Ægypt* been the same it was in latter Ages, it had been as great a disparagement to *Moses*, as 'tis now justly reputed a Commendation, That he was accomplished in all the *Ægyptian* Learning, and had amounted only to this, That he was a vain trifling, Superstitious Fellow. And what the *Egyptian* Priest objected to the *Greeks*, That they were always Children, might be

be more truly applied to themselves, if it be the property of Children to value trifles. What Childish Foolerics their *Hieroglyphicks* were, Learned Men now prove from the lost labour, and fruitless industry of *Kircher's Oedipus Ægyptiacus*. Certainly, if they had design'd to abuse and debauch this humour, they could scarce have contriv'd more fond and extravagant Emblems; and indeed their Courseness, and unlikeness to the things they should resemble, sufficiently discover them to have been but the rude Essays of a Barbarous and undisciplin'd *Fancy*. These *Hieroglyphicks*, says the Learned Bishop *Wilkins*, seem to be but a slight, imperfect Invention, suitable to those first and ruder Ages; much of the same Nature with that Mexican way of Writing by Picture, which was a meer shift they were put to, for want of the Knowledge of Letters. And it seems to me questionable, says the same Author, whether the *Ægyptians* did not at first use their *Hieroglyphicks*
upon

upon the same account, namely, for want of Letters. It is scarce credible what a mighty noise this *Hieroglyphick* way of Philosophizing hath made, though there is so little of substance in it, and how exceedingly it took in the Infancy of the World; as it is the property of Children, to be taken more with sensible Forms, Shadows, or Pictures, which please the Fancy, than with solid Reason. Indeed, to a Man that considers it, nothing could ever seem more preposterous to the design of Learning, than these *Hieroglyphicks*, or Mystical Representations, which were unavoidably clogg'd with two Inconveniencies, very unsuitable to the propagation of Knowledge, which were Obscurity and Ambiguity: For it not only cost them a great deal of Time to gather up such *Symbolical* Things, which might represent their Conceptions; but when they had pitch'd upon them, they were lyable to a great variety of *Interpretations*, as is evident in all those remainders

remainders of them, preserved by the Industry of some Ancient Writers. I cannot therefore imagine any rational Man could think that Study worth his pains, which at the highest can amount but to a *Conjecture*; and when it is come to that with a great deal of pains, it is nothing but some ordinary and trivial Observation. Certainly (saith the Learned *Stillingfleet*) *this kind of Learning deserves the highest form among the DIFFICILES NVGÆ, and all these Hieroglyphicks put together, will make but one good one, and that should be for LABOUR LOST.* I might here (if it were not too great a Digression) shew how very Pernicious the use of these *Hieroglyphicks* were to the Vulgar, who seeing the *Attributes* of God represented under the shapes of *Animals* and *Plants*, took occasion to adore those Corporeal Things, and so became the most Superstitious of all Nations, going so far as to deifie *Garlick, Onions, Rats, and Toads.*

But

But to proceed : The truth of it is, the *Egyptians* seem to have had only Knowledge enough, to know that their Neighbours had none at all, and cunning enough to pretend an inspection into strange and abstruse Mysteries; knowing that others by reason of their Ignorance could not controul them, and by reason of their Credulity would be very apt to credit them ; And thence they continually abus'd the Credulous *Grecians* with Tales and Fables. The Learned *Stillingfleet* tells us, There want not grounds of Suspicion, that the old *Egyptian* Learning was not of that Elevation, which the present distance of our Age makes us apt to think it was. And the Learned *Conringius*, in his Book *de Hermeticâ Medicinâ*, hath endeavour'd to shew the great defects there were in it. Nor can it, I think, be denied, saith *Stillingfleet*, but according to the reports we have now concerning the old *Ægyptian* Learning, some parts of it were frivolous, others obscure, a
great

great deal Magical, and the rest short of that Improvement, which the accession of the parts and industry of after Ages gave unto it. It were easie to shew, how much even those parts of Learning, wherein the *Ægyptians* and the other *Ancients* did most excel, have been improved in these latter Ages; But this Task having been performed by abler Pens, I shall only touch upon three Things, so very useful to Mankind, viz. *Anatomy*, *Geography*, and *Navigation*; to shew what a mighty improvement they have received in this last Age. First then, as for *Anatomy*; This Art was doubtless in very little use among the *Ancients*. I know indeed, there are some who tell us, that the *Ægyptians* were very accurate in the Knowledge of *Anatomy*; but when I consider how excessively curious and Ceremonious, or rather Superstitious they were in preserving their Bodies entire and unputrified, I cannot but conceive their opening them was rather for the *Embowelling*, than
the

the *Anatomizing* of them. As for the *Grecians*, this Art could not well be in practice among them, because their usual Custom was to Burn their dead Bodies, as we find it attested by *Homer*, *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, and *Plutarch*; and besides, had *Anatomy* been in use among the *Grecians*, there is no dispute but the works of *Hipocrates*, yet extant, would have discovered it, which we do not find in any place they do: Nay, so far from that, that *Hippocrates* himself going one time to visit *Democritus*, he happen'd to find him busie in Dissecting several Beasts, who asking him what he meant by his being so employ'd, *Democritus* (by way of Apology) makes him this reply, *Hæc Animalia quæ vides propterea secò, non Dei opera perosus, sed fellis bilisque naturam disquirens*. Now, if he apprehended that the Dissecting of Beasts might be lookt upon as an *hating* of Gods works, he might much more have feared that censure, had he cut up the Bodies
of

of *Men*. Nor does it appear by any thing extant in the Writings of *Galen*, that that other *Father of Physicians*, ever made any *Anatomy* of *Humane Bodies*. Nor was this *Art* practised among the *Romans*, nor indeed could it be, forasmuch as they held it unlawful, *Aspicere humana exta*, (as *Pliny* in his Preface to his 28 Book tells us) to look upon the Entrails of *Mens Bodies*, And *Dion* in his 55th Book says, That it was allowed to *Tiberius* to touch the Body of *Augustus*, *Quod nefas aliàs erat*, which otherwise had been unlawful. And that the *Primitive Christians* favour'd not the Practice of *Anatomy*, will plainly appear from *Tertullian*, who in the 4th Chapter of his Book *de Anima*, speaking of one *Herophilus*, doubts whether to call him *Medicum* or *Lanium*, a *Physician* or a *Butcher*, *Qui Hominem odit, ut nosset*, saith he, Who hated Man, that he might know him: And *St Augustine* in his 22th Book *de Civ. Dei. Cap. 24.* runs much up-

on the same strain. And among others we find Pope *Boniface* the 8th such a profess'd Enemy to this art of dissecting Humane Bodies, that he threatens immediately his *Thunderbolt* of *Excommunication* to all such as should do any thing of this nature. Thus we see how very shie and unacquainted the *Ancients* were with this most excellent Art, which certainly is one of the most useful in humane Life, as tending most to the Eviscerating, and disclosing the secrets of Nature. But now in these latter Ages, we have taken off this thick Veil of Superstition, and there is scarce any Man, who has not a desire to know, *How curiously and wonderfully he is made.* Hence then *Anatomy* hath of late been a *free and general Practice*; and particularly in this Age it hath receiv'd wonderful Improvements. For proof whereof I need not take much pains, since there is no Man that hath the least insight into Physick, but knows how much the Learned *Dr. Harvey* in

in that excellent Treatise of his, *De Generatione Animalium*, hath transcended all that went before him, in that full and satisfactory account he there presents the World with, concerning the Constitution, Structure, and Nutrition of Humane Bodies: What a mighty name hath he justly got in the *Orbis Literarius*, by that wonderful and surprizing discovery of the *Circulation of the Blood*; a Doctrine so Universally embraced, and so unquestionably true, that a Physician would be thought a Heretick *primæ Classis*, who should in the least dispute it? How much is the whole Colledge of Physicians indebted to the memory of the Famous Dr. *Glisson*, for giving them a more true and perfect account of the Nature of Sanguification, Bilification, Separation of Urine, and other Humours from the Mass of Blood, than ever the World was formerly acquainted with? And does not the Incomparable Dr. *Willis* deserve to be reckon'd among

I the

the Benefactors of Mankind, for those great Discoveries he hath made of Nutrition, Generation, and Separation of the *Succus Nervosus*, and Animal Spirits, with their præternatural affections? How glimmering a light, and how imperfect a notion had the Ancients of the nature of the *Saliva*, and other Juices that are convey'd into the Mouth, together with their Passages; until our Learned and Famous Country-Man, Dr. *Wharton*, and of late the Learned *Steno* so happily disclos'd those Secrets of Nature? Did any of the Ancients ever imagine, that the Lungs consisted only of Vessels and Bladders? That the Liver, Spleen, and Reins were *Conglomerate Glandules*; and yet that these are so, that expert Anatomist, and great Naturalist, *Malpighius*, hath informed the World? Which of the Ancients ever dreamt, That the Testicles of the Male should be nothing but a *Conglomeration of Vessels*; and the Female Testicles, *Ovaries*; was not this

this Discovery also an honour reserv'd for the present Age, and to the Industrious and Learned *De Graef* are the thanks due? Who among the Ancients ever rightly inform'd us as to the Operation of *Cathartick* Medicines in Humane Bodies; or as to the Reason of the different Colours of the *Excrements*, that are observ'd to be evacuated by them, until that great *Anatomical* light, *Sir George Ent*, imparted it to the World? Which was it of the Ancients, that ever had a true notion how the Chyle was convey'd into the Mass of Blood? We very well know, they told us it discharg'd it self through the *Meseraick* Veins into the Liver; but as to its true Passage into the Blood, they were as little able to give an account of that, as they were to demonstrate the Commixture of the Air therewith; and yet they had the confidence, to teach it in their Schools as an *Ens Rationis*, though they had never made any Proof, or Experiment

ment for the truth of this Assertion. In what a high Measure then did that great Antomist Dr. *Lower*, oblige the World, by his great Industry and indefatigable pains, who in that rare and admirable Tract of his, *De Corde*, hath not only more punctually shew'd the true passage of the *Chyle* through its Lacteals, Receptacle, and Chyliferous ducts, than formerly; but hath plainly demonstrated that it is impossible there can be any other, by which it should have its discharge into the Mass of Blood? Nor are his Arguments less nervous and cogent, for proving the Commixture of the nitrous Particles of the Air with the Mass of Blood. Thus have I given you an account of several of the most considerable Improvements made in this present Age, in that part of Physick relating to Anatomy; All which ingenious and excellent Inventions, are of great use, as affording us better Hypotheses in Physick, and by Consequence tending to a better and more

more effectual way of Curing Diseases.

The next thing that falls under our Consideration, is to shew how much *Geography* hath lately been Improv'd. The Ancients were so very defective in this Art or Science, that the Learned *Varenius* tells us, That the most General and Necessary Things belonging thereunto, were then unknown; as the Flux and Reflux of the Sea; the Habitableness of the Torrid Zone; the Poplar property of the Magnet; the Diversity of Winds, the true Dimension of the Earth; Nor had they any true Descriptions of remote Countries, concerning which both the *Greeks* and *Romans* had very fabulous Relations; they knew not that the Earth was encompassed by the Sea, and might be sailed round; They were totally ignorant of *America*, and both the North and South parts of this Hemisphere; yea, and understood very little of the remoter parts of their own *Asia*;

That part of the *Indies* that lies on the other side of the River *Ganges*, was in a manner a *Terra Incognita* to them ; they knew little or nothing of the vast Kingdom of *China*, nothing of *Japan*, or the numerous Oriental Islands, and these made a great, if not the best part of *Asia*. But that which to me seem'd stranger, or more remarkable, is, That neither *Thucydides* nor *Herodotus*, nor any other Greek Author Cotemporary with them, have so much as mention'd the *Romans*, though then growing up to a dreadful power, and being both *Europeans*. *Budæus* in his 4th Book *De Asse*, tells us, That the *Grecians* were so utterly ignorant of the *Spaniards*, that *Ephorus*, one of their most accurate Geographers, took *Spain*, which he calls *Iberia*, to be a City. It was in former times counted so dangerous a thing to believe the *Antipodes*, that *Boniface*, Archbishop of *Mentz*, by chance seeing a Treatise written by *Virgilius*, Bishop of *Saltzburg*, touch-

ing

ing the *Antipodes*, thinking that some Damnable pernicious Doctrine might be couched under that strange Name, complain'd first to the Duke of *Bohemia*, and afterwards to Pope *Zachary*, *Anno*. 745. By whom the poor Bishop (whose great misfortune was to be Learned in such a blockish Age) was condemn'd as a Heretick. Nay, even *St. Austin*, *Lactantius*, and some other of the Ancient Writers, do by no means allow of the *Antipodes*, but look upon it to be a ridiculous, incredible story ; And Venerable *Bede* is much of the same Opinion. The Learned *Fracastorius* saith, That our Ancestors knew little Westward beyond the *Fortunate Islands*, and Eastward as little beyond *Catygara*, now call'd *Canton*, the Richest City in *China* ; So that (as that Learned Author informs us) of the whole Habitable World, scarce one half was known to the Ancients. Now, by the account I have here given, it plainly appears, how grossly ignorant the Ancients were

in the knowledge of *Geography*, at also what a vast Improvement it hath received in these latter Days For our Navigation is far greater, our Commerce is more general, our Charts more exact, our Globes more accurate, our Travels more remote, our Reports more intelligent and sincere; and consequently, our *Geography* far more perfect, than it was in the Elder Times of *Polybius* and *Possidonius*; yea, than in those of *Ptolomy*, *Strabo*, and *Pomponius Mela*, who lived among the *Cæsars*. And if this Art was so very defective in the flourishing times of the *Roman* Empire, there is no dispute but it was much more so, in the days of *Aristotle* and the *Græcians*: And therefore no wonder the *Macedonian* Youth was no better instructed, than to believe he had Conquer'd the whole World: when (God knows) there were Nations enough, both before him and behind him, to have swallow'd up the *Young Commander*, and his *Triumphant Armies*, at a Morsel.

I am now come to the last *Parallel*, and that is, to shew what vast Improvements the Art of Navigation hath received in these last Ages. *Cardan*, a great searcher into the Curiosities of Nature, tells us, That among other late Noble Inventions, that of the *Mariners Compass* is the most worthy of Admiration, as being of the greatest use and Convenience to Mankind. By the help hereof, we are now able to find out a way through the *vast Ocean*, in the greatest Storms and darkest Nights, where is neither Path to follow, nor Inhabitant or Passenger to enquire ; It points out the way to the skillful *Mariner*, when all other helps fail him, and that with greater certainty than the wit of Man can possibly do. By means hereof, are the Commodities of all Countries discover'd, Trade, Traffick, and Humane Society maintain'd, their several Forms of Government and Religion observ'd, and the whole World made as it were
 one

one *Common-Wealth*, and the most distant Nations, *Fellow Citizens* of the same *Body Politick*. But the best way to make us rightly value the blessing of this Invention, is, by considering the many shifts and Inconveniencies the Ancients were put to, for want of it. We may easily imagine, how inconvenient the Ancients found it to sail by the guidance of the Stars: For in dark Cloudy weather, when their *Pleiades*, *Helice*, and *Cynosura* were not to be seen, the Pilot was always at a loss for his Guide, and knew not how to steer his Ship, but lay expos'd to the casual conduct both of Winds and Tides. And for this reason, the Ancients seldom or never durst venture into the main Ocean, but were fain to go creeping along by the Shoar side: And no more than this (as we have reason to believe) did the *Phœnicians* and *Carthaginians*, the *Tyrians* and *Sydonians*; who though renowned in History for great *Navigators*, yet by the most Learned are

are thought to have perform'd their Voyages only by *Coasting*, and not by *Crossing* the Ocean. Hence therefore it was, That the Commerce and Communications of those days were very inconsiderable; Their famed Travels in Comparison were nothing: And that renowned ten years Voyage of *Ulysses* (so highly celebrated by the Poets of Old) was much short of what many of our Merchants do now every Year perform. Thus you see how very defective the Ancients were in this Art of Navigation, the Benefits and Advantages whereof are so very Considerable, That the Wealth and Strength of a Nation are really to be computed in Proportion to their flourishing herein. It was long since a wise and true Observation of *Cicero*, *Qui Mare tenet, eum necesse est RERUM potiri*, He that commands the Sea, must necessarily enjoy all things. There is not any thing can be a greater Demonstration of the Flourishing of a Nation, than when
its

its Genius lies towards *Naval* Affairs, and when by its Industry it is arriv'd to a Sovereignty of the *Seas*; This is the true Characteristical mark of the greatness of Empire: For whoever is Master of the Ocean, does *ipso facto* command the Trade of the World, and whoever hath the Command of that, hath the Absolute disposal of the Riches of the World, and that Money is that which governs Mankind, is a Demonstration as clear as any in *Euclide*. Thus without the least straining of the Argument, we see it naturally follows, That nothing is more vain or ridiculous, than for a Prince, or State, to pretend to an uncontrollable Greatness, that hath not first laid their Foundation in the Deep. And who can be a better instance of this than that Great Emperour *Charles the Fifth*, whose carelessness in his *Naval* concerns not only broke his own Design as to the *Universal Monarchy*, but likewise terminated in the ruine of his *Successor* ?
And

And this oversight or neglect (though too late) that great Prince was sensible of, when he so strictly gave it in Charge to his Son *Philip*, That if either he would be happy at Home, or considerable Abroad, he should take care to make himself Great at Sea. By his Example then, let no Prince, who aspires to be great, slight or neglect this *Watry Element* ; since 'tis but a jest in Politicks, and an *Utopian* Fancy, to think to arrive at the utmost height of Empire, without *Fleets* and *Armada's* : And that Prince who thinks to give Law to Mankind, must be sure in the first place to make the *Sea* his Friend. This (without a Figure) is to build upon a Rock, whose Foundation will stand firm and sure. And therefore that Spirit of Laziness, which makes the *Spaniard* so much slight this Rule, is that, which (in spite of the Wealth of the West *Indies*) keeps him so poor and beggarly : And while he sits idle at home, swelling with his own Pride, the *English* and *Dutch* (by their

their Industry) grow Rich by his Spoils, and with his Treasure of the *West Indies* do they carry on the Trade of the *East*. Thus you see, the improving of Trade and Commerce, is no such slight matter; Nor is it to be wonder'd, that this does so often prove the Ball of Contention; for men may well be allowed to be zealous, when their interest is so nearly concern'd; and this, that Wise and Glorious Princess, *Queen Elizabeth*, very well knew, when she so narrowly ey'd and observ'd the *Dutch*, whom she was always jealous of, lest they should grow too great in Navigation, and so by that means might prove our Competitors both by Sea and Land. Since then Commerce and Navigation bring such mighty advantages to a Nation, 'tis no wonder, I say, that the greatest and wisest States, and Governments, have been so very solicitous for the improving it. *Trade* is the very Life and Soul of the *Universe*, which, like the *Vital Blood* in the Body, Circulates to the Health

Health, and well-being of the whole and when by the failure of Industry, there is a stop put to *Commerce*, it often proves as fatal to the *Body Politick*, as the stagnating of the Blood does to the *Natural Body*. What were the World but a rude and dull *Indigested Lump*, a noisome and pestilential Mass, did not *Commerce*, like the *Sun*, by its *Universal Rays*, exhale all its malignant and noxious Vapours, and by a continual Motion and Transaction, render it wholesome and profitable? What would become of the *Busy Soul* of Man, had she not found out variety of Employment for its Exercise? And therefore *Nature* wisely did foresee the many and great Inconveniencies of *Idleness*, how that it would Convert the World into another *Chaos*, making the *Earth* but as one dull and useless *Mass*, when she hid her Rarities and Treasures in the secret Bowels thereof, and buried them in the *Watry Deep*, and lodg'd them at so vast and remote a distance, that so their *Worth* and *Value* might be

be a *Spur* to *Labour* and *Industry* to fetch them thence. Nay, God himself is particularly call'd *the God of the Isles*, as looking on them, by Virtue of their skill in *Navigation*, to be the best *Factors* for the *Common Good*; and as a Blessing upon their *Industry*, we find most *Isles* and *Maritime* places exceed all *In-land* *Cities* and *Countries* in *Riches*, and *Variety* of *Plenty*. We see then, 'tis not the vastness of *Territory*, but the *Convenience* of *Situation*; nor the *Multitude* of *Men*, but their *Address* and *Industry*, which improve a *Nation*. Now, since we have hitherto discours'd of *Trade* in general, and the several *Advantages* that accrue from thence; possibly the *Reader* may not think it altogether impertinent, if we entertain him with an *Account* of the *Original* of *Trade*, and shew how, and by what steps and *Methods* *Commerce* hath advanc'd it self amongst *Mankind*. The first of all *Humane* *Race*, when they were dispers'd into several *Lands*, were at first sustain'd by the
Fruits

Fruits of the *Earth*, which fell to their share. These at first they cherish'd, and us'd, not by any *Rules* of *Art*, but by that *Natural Sagacity*, which teaches all Men to endeavour their own Preservation. And that they might peaceably enjoy these, they thought the best Course they could take, was to Associate themselves into Families, and to enter into little Leagues, and thus begun *Civil Government*. But finding that no Place was so fruitful as to produce all Things necessary for Humane Life; this put them upon a Necessity, either of taking by force what their Neighbours possess'd, or else of Exchanging the several Productions of their respective Soils. This then was the way and Method of *Trading*, in the first Ages of Mankind; when one had eaten or spent what was his own, he repair'd to his Neighbour for more, at the same time accommodating him with some other Thing whereof he stood in need, by way of Exchange,

K

change,

change, the respective value of the Things being limited according to their estimation of their goodness and scarcity, in the first place; and then of their Beauty or Comeliness. And because Oxen and Sheep afforded them the most Commodities, as their skins for Clothing, and their Milk and Flesh for Food, besides other uses to which they were serviceable, they made all their Traffick with *Cattle*, in which their whole wealth consisted. But because 'twas too troublesome a thing for Man to drive always a Flock of Sheep before him, or lead a Cow by the Horn, for making of payment; the Industry of Men encreasing, they cast their Eyes upon that which was in the next degree of most use to them, and most durable; and finding that nothing was of more general use than *Iron* and *Copper*, and especially that the latter was the fairest, and easiest to be melted, and cast into Kettles and other Domestick Utensils, they made
choice

choice thereof, mutually giving and receiving it, by weight, for other things they needed, and divided it by *Pounds*, which word still remains amongst us, to signifie Twenty Shillings, which is very near the just value that a Pound of *Copper* had in those days. And to save the Labour of weighing this *Pound*, and the parts of it, they stamp'd upon one side the Figure of a *Ship*, with the weight and value; and on the other side the Picture of one of those *Beasts*, which are design'd by the word *Pecus*, whence *Money* came to be call'd *Pecunia*. Afterwards the *Arms* of the *Prince* were substituted instead of the *Ship*, and *Constantine* put a *Cross* in the place of the *Beast*. Now because, in the old *Gaulish* Language, a *Ship* was call'd *Pile* (whence the Word *Pilote* remains to this day) the side of the *Coin* on which the *Ship* was is still call'd *Pile*, and the other *Cross*, how different stamps soever have succeeded since. This was the *first Original*

of *Trade*, which from a narrow Commerce between the Hills, the Vallies, the Woods, the Plains, and the Rivers, that border'd one upon another, is since extended to the whole Compass of the Earth. And now, 'tis high time to dismiss this Subject of *Navigation* and *Trade*; and therefore having already demonstrated, how much the Present Age hath transcended Former Ages in those three parts of Learning, viz. *Anatomy*, *Geography*, and *Navigation*, I now proceed.

If from the first Ages of the World we turn our Eyes to latter Times, I mean, to the Times of *Popish* Darkness, we shall Comparatively find that great is the light we now enjoy. Ignorance (we know) is the Mother of their Devotion and the very Essence of *Popery*, therefore no wonder that before the Reformation Learning was at so low an Ebb. King *Alfred* in his Preface upon the *Pastorals* of *St. Gregory* (which he translated into *English*) says, That when

when he came first to his Kingdom, He knew not one *Priest* on the South side of the River *Humber*, that understood his Service in *Latine*, or that could Translate an Epistle into English. *Vignier* in his *Ecclesiastical History* affirms, That *Gerbertus* the first Archbishop of *Rhemes* and *Ravenna*, afterwards *Pope*, under the name of *Silvester* the Second, was reputed a *Magician*, because he was well skill'd in the *Mathemathicks*. (Thus, saith Dr. *Fuller*, do Ignorant People count all *Circles* above their own *Sphere* to be *Conjuring*, and presently cry out, those Things are done by the *Black Art*, for which their dim Eyes can see no Colour in reason. And in such Cases, when they cannot fly up to *Heaven* to make it a *Miracle*, they fetch it from *Hell* to make it *Magick*.) And how low Learning ran in *England* amongst the Native Nobility, in the Reign of King *Henry* the Sixth, too plainly appears by the *Motto* on the Sword of the *Martial*, Earl of *Shrewsbury*,

which was, *Sum Talboti, pro Occidere in imicos meos*, the best Latin that Noble Lord, and perchance his Chaplains too (in that Age) could afford. *Erasmus* tells us, That some Divines in his time undertook to prove, That *Hereticks* ought to be put to Death, from those Words of the Apostle, *Hæreticum Hominem devita*, which it seems they understood, as if he had said, *De vitâ tolle*. I have read of two *Fryars* disputing whether God had made any more *Worlds* than One; the One wisely alledging that passage of the Gospel touching the ten *Lepers* which were cleans'd, *Annon Decem facti sunt Mundi?* As if God had made Ten Worlds; the other (with great gravity) looking into the Text, replies as wisely, with the words immediately following, *Sed ubi sunt Novem?* But what is become of the Nine? So as from thence he would prove but one to be left. An old Priest in *Henry the Eighth's* time, being reprov'd for reading in
his

his Service Book *Mumpsimus Domine*, instead of *Sumpsimus*, reply'd, He had now us'd *Mumpsimus* these thirty Years, and for his part he would not leave his old *Mumpsimus* for their new *Sumpsimus*. At any time when their *Priests* were taken breaking *Priscian's* head, their common Defence was, those words of *St. Gregory*, *Non debent verba cælestis Oraculi subesse regulis Donati*, 'The words of the Heavenly Oracles ought not to be Subject to the Rules of *Donatus*. But these are Stories so well known, that I ought to Apologise for insisting so long upon them; and therefore to proceed to the last Question, viz.

Whether Men do now live to as great an Age, as they did formerly? It must be granted, That in the first Ages of the World, both before and for some time after the *Flood*, Men did generally arrive to a much greater Age, than they have done since. But this is certainly to be attributed to some *extraordinary Cause*, and not

to the *Ordinary Course of Nature*. The World (we know) was then to be replenish'd with Inhabitants, which could not so speedily be done, but by an extraordinary Multiplication of Mankind ; Neither could that be done, but by the long lives of Men. And again, Arts and Sciences were then to be planted, for the better effecting whereof, it was requisite, that the same Men should have the Experience and Observation of many Ages. We know it was the Complaint of *Hippocrates*, *Ars longa, Vita brevis* ; And therefore Almighty God, in his Wisdom did then proportion Mens *Lives* to the length of *Arts* : And as God gave them this special Priviledge to live long ; so 'tis probable he gave them withal a Temper, and Constitution of Body, answerable thereunto. As also the *Food* wherewith they were nourish'd, especially before the *Flood*, may well be thought to have been more *wholesome* and *nutritive*, and the *Plants* more *Medicinal* :

dicinal: And happily the *Influence* of the *Heavens* was at that time, in that *Climat* where the *Patriarchs* liv'd, more benigne and favourable. These (as far as we poor Mortals can Conjecture) might be the reasons, why Divine Providence did assign to those first Inhabitants so long a lease of their Lives. But in after-times, when the World was fully Peopl'd, and Arts and Sciences were Propagated, then it pleas'd the same Divine Providence to curtail, and abridge the Life of Man; inso-much that in *Moses's* time the common Standard of Humane Life was *Seventy*, or at most *Eighty Years*. And so it was ever after counted. Hence also *Herodotus* sets the longest Bounds of Man's Life to be but *Eighty Years*. *Barzillai* was said to be a very Old Man, and yet he liv'd but to fourscore: And *David* was full of Days, yet but *Seventy Years Old*. *Solomon*, as Divines Conjecture, was not *Sixty*, yet it is said, *when Solomon was Old*. The Learned
Joannes

Joannes Jonstonius tells us, That in all the Records of the *Roman, Greek, French, and German* Emperours, there were but four who liv'd to be four-score. And our *English* Chronicle informs us, That *Queen Elizabeth* out-liv'd all her Predecessors from *William* the Conquerour. *Petrus Crinitus* saith, that the *Ægyptians* by a subtle Conjecture, taken from the Weight of the *Heart*, found out within what bounds the Life of Man was included; they affirming, That it was scarce possible for a Man to live above a Hundred Years: For, said they, the *Heart* every Year till Fifty increased two *Drams*, and from thence to an hundred Years it decreas'd as much, and so returning to its Original Weight, it can then make no further Progress. Now, though this Observation does certainly carry in it more of *Curiosity* than *Truth*, yet doth it plainly shew, That the common Opinion of the *Ancients*, was, That Men did seldom live above a Hundred Years.

Years. And we find, the Learned *Varro* was also of the same Belief, and therefore he tells us, They call'd the space of a Hundred Years, *Seculum*, from *Senex*, an Old Man, because they thought that was the utmost Period of Mans life. Thus then we see, That Men live now as long as they did formerly ; and that for these three Thousand Years at least there hath been no Alteration. It is the Observation of that great Philosopher, the Lord *Verulam*, *Decursus Seculorum, & Successio Propaginis, nihil videntur omninò demere de Diuturnitate vitæ* ; The Course of Times, and Succession of Ages, seem to have no whit abated from the length of Mens Lives. *No doubt*, says that Noble Lord, *There are times in all Countreys, wherein Men live either longer or shorter ; longer, most commonly when the Times are Barbarous, and the Diet more plain, and more given to Bodily Exercise ; Shorter, when they are more Civil, and there*
is

is more Luxury and Idleness; But in these Things there is a Vicissitude and Revolution; The Succession of Generations alters it not. If it did, the first Man in reason should have lived longest, and the Son should still come short of his Fathers Age: So that whereas *Moses* tells us, That the Days of Man in his time were Threescore Years and Ten, by this reckoning they might well enough by this time be brought to ten or twenty, or thirty at the most. In a word, we will not say, but that Accidents, Accidental Occurrences, Intemperance, ill and noxious Effluvia from the Earth, Waters, and ~~intemperature~~ of the Air, and other Accidents may in these latter Ages of the World produce some such Diseases, and accidental Disorders, as may possibly more infest Mankind, and occasion more Mortality, than in former Ages: But as to the regular and ordinary Course of Natural Procedure and State of Things

Things with Mankind, yea and other Animals, there seems to be little or no decay, or Variation from what hath been formerly.

ESSAY VI.

Of Passion; And whether the Passions are an Advantage, or Disadvantage to Men.

'T WAS the usual saying of a very Ingenuous Person, *That Passionate Men, like Yorkshire Hounds, are apt to over-run the Scent.* They have not the Patience to pause and deliberate, but *Quicquid in Buccam venerit*, whatsoever they think they speak; and therefore it is, they often run into such gross Absurdities; for as *Aristotle* well observes, *Qui citò pronunciat, ad pauca respicit.* A mind transported with Passion, rejects the best Reasons, and retains the worst Opinions; like a *Bolter*, which lets the *Flour* pass, and keeps nothing

thing but the *Bran*. Therefore *Plato* speaking of Passionate Persons, says, They are like Men who stand upon their Heads, They see all things the wrong way. How inconsistent Passion and Reason is, *Seneca* seems to intimate, by that Expression of his, *Nemo consilium cum Clamore dat*: And how incompatible the Spirit of God and Passion is, the Holy Scriptures themselves do plainly shew; For when *Elias* was upon the Mountain, there came a Whirlwind, and God was not there; then an Earthquake, and God was not there; But at last came a still Voice, and God was there. The Scripture likewise exhorteth us, *To possess our Souls in Patience*; intimating, according to the Lord *Bacon's* Paraphrase, *That whosoever is out of Patience, is out of the Possession of his Soul*: Well therefore might the Poets call *Anger a short Madness*: For look upon an Angry Man, when he is in the height of his Rage, and you may see all *Africa*, and its Prodigies
in

in him ; He is more savage than the Tygers there ; Blow him into a Flame, and you may see *Vulcano's*, *Hurricanes*, and *Borasco's* in him. And certainly were he (while his Passion was thus raging) forc'd to look himself in the Glass, those very Convulsions and Distortions his Anger had put him into, would soon shame him into a better temper. In short, there is no surer Argument of a Great Mind, than not to be transported to Anger by any Accident whatsoever ; The Clouds and Tempests are form'd below, but all above is quiet and serene ; which is the true Emblem of a Brave Man, that surpasses all Provocations, and lives within himself. This made a Great Philosopher say, that a Wise Man ought to be like the *Caspian Sea*, which is said never to *Ebb* or *Flow*. But from this excess of the Passions to infer an utter uselessness of them, to me seems very unreasonable : For I cannot think Nature is such a severe Step-Dam, as that by her
Planting

Planting these Passions in us, the design'd only to Plague and Torment us: I therefore conclude, There is an honest and an innocent use of them. As *Bias* once said of the Tongue, that it was the best and worst part of Man, so may we of the Affections; *Nec meliores unquam servos, nec Dominos sentit Natura Deteriores*, They are the best Servants, but the worst Masters that Nature can have; like the Winds, which being moderate, carry the Ship; but drown it, being tempestuous. And as it is observed in greater States, so does the same hold true in Man's little Common-wealth, That those who are the fittest for Service, if once they become Mutinous, always prove the most dangerous sort of Enemies: And thus the old Rule, *Corruptio Optimi Pessima*, holds true. I know there have been several Modern *Stoicks*, who with a zeal much transcending their *Knowledge*, have declaim'd against the Passions; Nothing less than an utter Extirpation

tion will fatisfie these Men: They are not contented with our keeping them under, and retaining them upon the same terms, as *Abraham did those Domesticks he bought with his Money*, whom the Scripture saith, *He both Circumcis'd, and kept as Servants*; But they tell us, that the Mind ought to deal with its Affections, just as *Pharaoh* would have dealt with the *Jews-Males*, whom he thought it best to cut off, for fear they might (some time or other) be in a condition to make head against him. But whether this be reasonable or no, let any Man judge: Because the Passions are now and then disorderly, must we therefore wish there were no Passions? No certainly; for this would be every whit as unreasonable, as to wish there were no *Rivers* in the world, because it sometimes happens, that by their overflowing we receive great Detriment. When I consider, That our Blessed Saviour, who took upon him all our *Natural* Infirmities, but

L

none

none of our *Sinful*, has been seen to *Weep*, to be *Sorrowful*, to *Pity*, and to be *Angry*; I cannot but then conclude, *That a Man may be Angry and Sin not.* It is not the bare Agitation, but the Sediment at the bottom that troubles and defiles the Water. The Passions are so far from being always hurtful, that we read of several that have receiv'd great advantages from them. For Wit proceeds from Active Spirits, or a good Degree of Heat in the Brain; And therefore they, who have been deny'd by Nature this Faculty, and will not take the Pains by Study and Exercise to improve their Parts, do oftentimes encrease their Heat by some high Passion, and so appear more Witty and Ingenious than at other times, when their Spirits (being as it were benumm'd with Cold) are not able to exert themselves; And from hence came that known saying, *Vexatio dat Intellectum.* Seneca, hearing a dull Orator make a most Eloquent Harangue

rangue the very day his Son dy'd, cry'd out, *Magna pars Eloquentiæ est Dolor*; so *Polus* the Actor, to enable him to make a more lively Representation of the Grief of a Father upon the body of his Deceased Son, brought in an *Urne* the Ashes of his own Son newly Dead. So much for the Passion of Grief. Then for Anger, *Si Natura negat, Facit Indignatio versum*. *Archilochus* and *Hipponaux* were two very indifferent Poets, yet in meer Spleen and Malice, to be revenged of two Persons that had injur'd them, invented those Doggrel sorts of Verses, *Iambicks* and *Scazons*, which they did to such a Perfection, that their Adversaries despairing of ever being able to answer them, made away themselves. And as for the Passion of Love, let the Smith of *Antwerp* pass for an Instance; who being rejected by his Sweet-Heart becaule of his dirty Profession, chang'd his Hammers and Anvil, for Pencils and Tables, and so from an Inconsiderable Black-

L 2

Smith,

Smith, he became the most noted Painter of his time. Thus we see, the Passions, if rightly manag'd, are of great Use and Service to us; But if once we suffer them to grow headstrong, Lions, Wolves, and Tygers are more governable. We too well know, there is not any one thing hath done more hurt to the Christian Religion, than the Spirit of Passion; as is most evident by those many late unhappy Disputes and Controversies amongst us. 'Tis strange, that Men cannot talk of Religion, but at the same time they must Quarrel too; as if the best way of establishing the Law of God, was by violating the Laws of Charity. I thank God my Charity is of an Extensive Nature; I refrain no man's Company, because his Opinion comes not up to mine; Nor do I think it reasonable, that a difference in Opinion should divide an Affection. Mens Understandings are not all of one Size and Temper; and therefore it cannot be imagin'd, there

there ever will be such a Consonancy, and Uniformity of Judgment amongst all Men, no, not amongst Wise and Good Men, but that in many things, yea, and those sometimes of great Importance, they may and will dissent one from another unto the Worlds end. But it is one thing to *Dissent from*, and another, to be at *Discord with*, a Man: *Ita dissensi ab illo* (says Tully concerning himself and Cato) *ut in disjunctione sententiæ, conjuncti tamen amicitia maneremus.* 'Tis an excellent Rule, saith Bishop Wilkins, to be observ'd in all Disputes, That Men should give soft words, and hard Arguments: That they should not so much strive to vex, as to convince an Enemy. If this were but diligently practis'd in all Cases, and on all sides, we might in a good Measure be freed from those vexations in the search of Truth, which the Wise Solomon, by his own Experience, did so much complain of, when he told us, That in much Wisdom there is

much Grief, and he that encreaseth Knowledge, encreaseth Sorrow. There is nothing so impertinent in Disputes and Controversies, as Anger and Passion: For every Man is fond of his own Notion, and no Man cares to be Huff'd and Hector'd out of it; And therefore this Blustering way is so far from inclining us to yield to Mens Opinions, that it rather hardens us against them, by giving us a prejudice to their Persons. They are the gentle Insinuations which pierce, as Oil is the most penetrating of all Liquors; And the best way of *Profelyting* Men, is to gain their Affections. If Disputes could be manag'd with Temper and moderation, Men might certainly reap great benefit by them: But our unruly Passions do so much get the Ascendant over our Understandings, that this is a thing rather to be wish'd, than to be expected. Upon this Consideration was it, That the great *Montaign* was for suppressing and hindering all Disputes and Controversies:

Controversies : And much of the same Mind was the Philosopher *Plato*, who in his *Republick* prohibits this Exercise to Fools and ill-bred People. I think, there is not any Man so ignorant, but knows, That nothing hath been a greater scandal to the Reformed Religion, either among *Heathens*, *Mahometans*, or *Papists*; nay, nor hath given a fairer occasion for bringing in of Atheism and Infidelity, than our Divisions and Animosities, which proceed from our many Controversies and Disputes of Religion. Indeed, our Controversies about Religion, saith the Learned *Stillingfleet*, have brought at last even Religion it self into a Controversie: For weaker heads, saith he, when they once perceive the Battlements shake, are apt to suspect the Foundation it self stands not firm; And if they see any thing call'd in Question, they presently conclude, there is nothing certain. *Luther*, observing how prejudicial School-Divinity had been to the

L 4 Christian

Christian Religion, crys out, *Quam primum apparuit Theologia Scholastica evanuit Theologia Crucis.* I wish the Disputes of this Age, have not done as much mischief. When Men will be wiser than God, and in their foolish Wisdom think it fit to add their strength to Gods weakness, as a speedier and surer way to establish the Truth ; then does God, to convince them of their folly, suffer that strong Man, the Enemy of the Gospel, (whom none but his Almighty Arm can bind and Master) to come, and Sow his Tares of Division, which soon over-runs the good Seed of the Church, and so brings all to Confusion. Thus then, by our foolish Notions and Conceptions do we often stain and dilute the very Fountain it self. And as the *Jews* dealt with the Blessed *Jesus*, so do we now with his Holy Religion, by platting its head with a Crown of Thorns. And this is that, that hath robb'd the Christian World of its Unity and Peace, and
made

made the Church the Stage of Everlasting Contentions. For nothing puts Men more out of humour one with another, than Schisms and unnecessary Breaches of Church Communion: This naturally sours the Tempers of Men, and alienates their Affections to the highest Degree; for both Parties endeavouring to vindicate themselves, are forc'd to recriminate, and these Recriminations always end in Heat and Passion; And so, like two *Flints* struck together, they will be continually sparkling and spitting fire at one another, till they have kindled the Quarrel into an inquenchable Flame. Thus we see, how much even Religion suffers by these unhappy Disputes and Quarrels among us: For there is nothing does more abate the inward strength of Religion, than when it is rarified into Airy Notions and Speculations; This (indeed) gnaws and consumes the very Vitals, and in a short time will quite destroy the substance of it.

It

It was the *Motto* of the Primitive Christians, *Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus*, our Religion consists not in *Talking*, but in *Doing* Great Things. But may not the *Reverse* of this be properly apply'd to the Present Age, viz. *Non vivimus, sed Magna Loquimur*. Religion is now become one of the *Artes Sermocinales*, a Talkative Mystery, an Art not to govern the *Mind*, and to regulate the *Actions*, but to Frame and Fashion *Discourse*. And now to conclude, 'tis no wonder, that our Disputes and Controversies have so ill an effect, when our unruly Passions have so great a share in them. For, as we have said before, the Passions if not moderated, are the Brutish Part in us; and therefore, when we transform our selves into *Beasts*, it is not to be suppos'd we can Act like *Men*.

ESSAY

ESSAY VII.

The variety of Opinions: Whence it proceeds: The uncertainty of Humane Knowledge.

ALL our several *Opinions* are nothing but the meer various Tasts of several Minds, framed partly by our several Natures, partly by our different Educations, and Instructions, and partly by the various Encounters, which we have met with in our ways of Life. Hence it is, that *Quot Homines, tot Sententiæ*, *Opinions* are as numerous as Mankind it self; and that the several Constitutions of our Minds, differ no less than those of our Bodies. There are as many Internal Forms of the Mind, as there are External Figures of Men: And the Soul of Man hath its Palat, as well as the Body; *Opinion* being nothing but the Gusto or Relish of the Soul: Nay, some have been so Critical, as
to

to affirm, That there is so great a Correspondence betwixt the one and the other, that those who are of a different Diet, are generally observ'd to be of different Opinions; and the Learned Dr. *Harvey* gives this for the reason, Because (says he) a different Diet sends up different *Steams* to the Head, and according to these *Steams* are Mens *Opinions*. But this sounding more like a *Notion* than a *Truth*, we shall lay no stress upon it, but proceed. There is (then) a certain Congruity of some Opinions to the particular Tempers of some Men; and therefore we see, how readily such Doctrines, as suit themselves to the particular Inclination of the Mind, or Understanding, are embraced, and received; whereas those that are opposite to it, are commonly rejected with the greatest contempt imaginable. Thus do we Love, and Hate without being able to give a Reason why. Some Faces both of Persons, and Things, we admire and doat on; to others,

others, much better deserving our esteem, we can scarcely afford a common Civility. Indeed, the dull and unactive Spirits, that concern not themselves in *Theory*, give not themselves the trouble to examine Matters, but taking Things in the Gross, follow the Common Belief, and are for keeping the beaten Road; But those, whose Minds are of a Brisker, and more Vigorous Constitution, will fall into that of their particular *Crafts*. Hence then, I say, is it, we find Men taking in some particular *Opinions* with strange Pleasure and Satisfaction, upon their very first Proposals; when at the same time they will not hearken to others, though they recommend themselves with a much greater strength of Reason. In a word, almost every one is satisfied, That there is a particular Genius, or special Inclination in Mens Minds, and that some *Opinions* do naturally make a much greater impression than others; But the *vexata Quæstio* is, how, or from

from whence this *Temperament* of the *Mind* proceeds. Some therefore tell us, That this great Diversity of the Operations of the Mind, is to be ascribed to the Souls Dependence upon the Body, and that a Good, or Bad Disposition of the *Organical* Parts, does certainly render the Soul either Vigorous or Unactive in its several Operations. Whatsoever defect (then) we may perceive in some Men, we are not to think it proceeds from any Deficiency in the Soul, but from the Coexistence it has with a Body ill dispos'd for Assistance and Information. For he who is carried in a Coach, (as the Body is *Vehiculum Animæ*) though he himself could go much faster, must yet receive such Motion as that affords; And Water, which is convey'd through Pipes and Aqueducts, though its Motion by it self would have been otherwise, must yet then be confin'd and limited by the Posture and Proportion of the Vessels through which it passes.

Hence

Hence we are told, That some Men
 are even by Nature, and Complexi-
 on, inclin'd to Vertue and Goodness ;
 As it was said of *Clitus*, (whom
Alexander in a Drunken humour
 slew,) *That he had Vertues by Na-
 ture, and Vices by Accident* ; And that
 others, even by the oddness of their
 particular Make and Contexture,
 are determin'd to Actions of Vice.
 It was a received Opinion among
 the Ancients, That outward Beauty,
 was an infallible Argument of inward
 Beauty ; and so on the contrary,
 That a deformed Body was a true
 Index of a deformed Mind, or an ill
 Nature. Hence was that of the Poet :

*Clauda tibi mens est, ut pes: Natura notaque
 Exterior certas Interioris habet.*

As also that of *Martial*, *Lib. 12.
 Epigram 54.*

*Crine ruber, niger ore, brevis pede, lumine laesus:
 Rem magnam praestas, Zoile, si bonus es.*

It was also the saying of *Victorinus*,
*In distorta Membra virtus cadere non
 potest:*

potest: And *Pythagoras* was so bi-
 gotted to this Opinion, that he
 would never admit into his School
 any that had the least Natural Ble-
 mish or Deformity. Upon this ge-
 neral Opinion was grounded that
 common saying, *Cave tibi ab iis,*
quos Natura Signavit, which we may
 render thus, *Whom God hath Markt,*
let Man Mark. And therefore *Ho-*
mer, speaking of the several ill Qua-
 lities of *Thersites*, takes care to fit
 him with a Body suitable to such a
 Mind. Now, the reason (possibly)
 why Nature for the most part or-
 ders it so, may be this; the Method
 she takes (though imperceptible to
 us) is Regular and Mathematical,
 and therefore probably nothing may
 more break and disorder that Sym-
 metry she observes, than by match-
 ing a good Soul with a deformed
 Body; for this seems to be *Impar*
Congressus, putting things unequally
 together. But yet this Rule is not
 so general, as to admit of no Excep-
 tion, as we may see in the Emperour
Galba,

Galba, a Prince of an unhappy outward Figure, of whom it was said, *Ingenium Galbæ malè habitat* ; The same may be also observ'd of *Agésilas*, and some others, (though not many ;) and therefore *Seneca* tells us, *Ex casâ vir Magnus exire potest, & ex deformi humilique Corpusculo formosus Animus & Magnus*. I grant indeed, several Examples there are of Great Persons, whose outward Deformities have been very remarkable, and yet we find their Vertues and good Qualities highly celebrated ; But yet (possibly) did we but make a narrow search into their Lives, we should find the difference and alteration was chiefly wrought by Education or Custom, which often-times over-sways Nature. Thus we see, what a great Correspondency there is betwixt the Soul and the Body, which is such, that they manifestly participate the Affections one of the other : And therefore if the Body be sick, the Soul is alter'd in its Operations, as we see in high Fevers, and other acute Diseases :

M eases :

eases: And on the contrary let the Soul be sad or joyful, the Body is so too. Therefore the Sophisters of old were wont to Purge themselves with *Hellebore*; when they would dispute best. For though in its Essence the Soul depends not on the Corporeal Organs, yet it depends upon the same in its Operations, which are different according to the diverse structures of the Organs; which, if they were alike dispos'd, their Actions would be alike in all, and at all times. Whence saith *Aristotle*, if an old Man had a young Mans Eyes, he would see as clear as a Young Man. That Ingenious Master of Poetry, Mr. *Dryden*, speaking of the mutability of *Man*, says, That our Minds are perpetually wrought on by the temperament of our Bodies: which (saith he) makes me suspect, they are nearer ally'd, than either our Philosophers, or School Divines will allow them to be. I have observ'd, says *Montaign*, That when the Body is out of Order, its Companion is seldom

seldom at ease: An ill Dream, or a Cloudy Day, has power to change this wretched Creature, who is so proud of a *Reasonable Soul*, and make him think to day what he thought not yesterday. The Learned Dr. *Henry More*. says, *That our Imagination alters, even as our Blood and Spirits are alter'd; And therefore, says he, as Dreams are the Fancies of those that sleep, so Fancies are but the Dreams of Men awake; And these Fancies by Day, as those Dreams by Night, will vary and change with the Weather, and present Temper of the Body.* But to proceed; Others are of Opinion, that this great Diversity proceeds from another Cause, to wit from the *Climat*. *Peter Heylin*, speaking of the Dispersion of the Families of the Sons of *Noah*, says, That though they all descended from one Common Root, yet by the Situations of their several Dwellings, they came to be of several Tempers and Affections; in which they were so different from one another, that they seem'd rather to have

been made at first out of several Principles, than to have been deriv'd from one Common Parent. The Ground or Reason of which difference (says *Heylin*) is to be attributed to the different Tempers of those Countries in which they liv'd, and to the different Influences of the Heavenly Bodies on those several Countreys; which do continue still the same, though many times the Countreys shift and change their Old Inhabitants. Thus, if we enquire into the old Characters, which either *Florus*, *Cæsar*, *Tacitus*, or *Juvenal* gave of the old *Brittains*, *Gauls*, *Germans*, *Normans*, &c. we shall find that the same Vertues, and Vices, do still prosper under the same Climats, notwithstanding in most of these Places the old Inhabitants, or their Breed, are quite wore away. 'Tis observ'd, That where the Heaven is always in the same Posture, as toward the *Poles*; or where the Sun heats almost in the same Degree, as near the *Equator*, (which makes the Days and Nights equal,) the Manners and Inclinations

clinations of the People are also equal: And on the contrary, Those that by the several Remotions and Approaches of the Sun have different Constitutions of *Air*, receive suitable impressions from the same, which are afterwards manifested in their Actions. As (therefore) Fruits and Beasts differ according to the several Countreys, in which they are; so are Men born more or less Warlike, Just, Temperate, and the like, according to their several *Climats*. And therefore *Plato* thank't God, That he was an *Athenian*, and not a *Theban*. *Plutarch* tells us, That those of the higher part of the City of *Athens* were of a quite contrary humour to those that dwelt about the Gate of *Pyreus*; and it is observ'd, that those who dwell on the North-side of a Mountain, differ as much from those that dwell on the South side, as they do both from those in the Valley. Now, from this Diversity of Mens Tempers, proceed the several Forms, and Constitutions of Government; and

thence it is, that in the same Countreys we find little Variation as to Government, but that in all Ages they have still kept to much one and the same Form; the same Genius or Temper ever continuing under the same *Climat*: And whenever any Country, either by perswasion, have Voluntarily, or by force have been compell'd to quit their old Form of Government; yet in process of Time they naturally return into the old Channel. This then is the reason, why those who inhabit the most Intemperate Climes, are always for preferring the Despotick, Arbitrary Rule; whereas those who live under the more temperate, and less severe Climates, especially in *Europe*, have affected and preferr'd more gentle and moderate Governments, running anciently much into Common-Wealths, and of latter Ages into Principalities, circumscrib'd by Laws, which differ not so much in Nature as in Name. The natural reason whereof, says that Accomplish'd Author, *Sir William Temple*,

ple, I take to be this, viz. *That in the more Intemperate Climats, the Spirits either exhal'd by Heat, or comprest by Cold, are render'd faint and sluggish, and by that reason the Men grow tamer and fitter for Servitude: That in more temperate Regions, the Spirits are stronger and more active, whereby Men become bolder in the Defence or Recovery of their Liberties.* Now by what we have already said, it plainly appears, That the great Variety of Mens Actions and Opinions cannot proceed from the Diversity of their Souls, which are accounted all equal, but from that of their Bodies; wherein according to the various Tempers thereof, the Soul produces that variety of Manners. Let us not then any longer wonder, to find so great a Diversity of Opinions in the World; since it is a thing wholly impossible for all Men to be of the same mind: For so long as Mens Organs are of several makes, and we live under divers Climats, we must necessarily have different Sentiments, and Apprehen-

sions of Things. Nor would there be any harm in this Diversity of Opinions, could Men but divest themselves of that Pride and Arrogance, which makes them so fond of Propagating their own Notions, But while every Man pretends to the *Spirit of Infallibility*, and must be a *Dictator* to the rest of Mankind, then there is nothing but Confusion and Disorder to be expected. And this was that, which made such Disturbance, and Embroilments amongst us in the late times: every Opinion was made an Article of Faith, and every Article became a Ground of a Quarrel, and every Quarrel made a Faction, and every Faction was zealous, and all zeal pretends for God, and whatsoever is for God cannot be too much; and indeed, we were come to that pass, That we thought we lov'd not God, unless we hated our Brother, and that we had not the Vertue of Religion, unless we persecuted all Religions but our own. But let us not deceive

deceive our selves, for, whatsoever some may think, this is not the violence that gains *Heaven*; Nor is there any thing that makes us more unlike God, who is the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Consolation, than a Furious, Hot, and Persecuting Spirit. His appearance was in the soft and still Voice, not in Whirlwinds and Hurricanes; and where there is *Spiritus Procellæ*, we may satisfy our selves it proceeds from another Principle. The *Holy Ghost* was pleas'd to appear not in the Form of a *Vulture*, (a ravenous and devouring Creature) but in the shape of a *Dove*, the Emblem of *Meekness*. The true Church is styl'd by the name of the *Lilly amongst Thorns*: The *Lilly* does not *Scratch* and *Tear*, that's the Property of *Thorns* and *Briars*, the most inconsiderable sort of shrubs. (And indeed, let us but reflect who were the chief Promoters of our late Persecutions, and we shall find they were the slightest of the *Clergy*, and the most Profligate of the *Laity*: None being

being so fit to make Shipwreck of other Mens Consciences, as those who have none of their own.) The most natural and effectual way (then) of Promoting the Blessed Gospel, is by following its own Rules, and Precepts of Meekness and Moderation. Sweetness and Ingenuity will more command Mens Minds, than Passion, Sourness, and Severity : As the soft Pillow sooner breaks the Flint, than the hardest Marble. Therefore, when we would convince Men of any Error by the strength of Truth, we should do it with all the tenderness, and in the most obliging manner we are able. For Truth and Love are two the most Charming Things in the World ; and when these go hand in hand together, there is no Humane Force can withstand them. But that which proves very mischievous to many, is their taking that to be *zeal* for God and Religion, which really is nothing but their own violent and furious Passion. True zeal then is a sweet,
Heavenly,

Heavenly, and gentle Flame, which makes us active for God, but always within the Sphear of Love. It never calls for *Fire from Heaven*, to Consume those who agree not with us in all Points and Circumstances. It is much of the Nature of that kind of *Lightning*, (that the Philosophers tell us of) which melts the *Sword* within, but never findgeth the *Scabbard*: It strives to save the Soul, but at the same time hurteth not the Body. In a word, we may learn what kind of *Zeal* it is we should make use of in promoting the Gospel, by an Emblem of Gods own, given us in the Scripture, those *Fiery Tongues*, which upon the Day of *Pentecost* sat upon the *Apostles*; and that these were Innocent Flames, no Man can doubt, for we do not find, that they did so much as findge an hair of their heads. This then is *true Zeal*, and whatsoever is more than this, proceeds from evil, and is no other than a *Fever* in the Soul. There is not
any

any thing that drives Men more furiously, nor that hath more disturb'd the Peace of Mankind, than *Mistaken Zeal*. *Odia Religionum sunt acerbissima*, is now grown into a *Proverb*; of all Hatreds, there are none more furious and unnatural, than those which arise out of Contrarieties in Religion; and it is generally observ'd, That the less Material their Difference, the more implacable is the Hatred: As the *Turks* think it more acceptable to God, to kill one *Persian*, than seventy Christians. Nothing so vehemently alienates Mens Affections, as variety of Judgment in matters of Religion; Here they cannot disagree, but presently they must fall together by the Ears; and when once Religion divides Mens minds, no other common Interest can unite them; and where Zeal dissolves Friendship, the ties of Nature are not strong enough to reconcile it: And therefore our Saviour tells us, That in this Case Men would forget all the Bonds

Bonds of Natural Obligation; inſo-
much that the Father would deliver
up his own Child, and the Children
their Parents unto Death: As we
find, that the bloody Hatred of *Cain*
againſt *Abel* aroſe from the different
Acceptance of their Sacrifices. Nor
indeed is it to be wonder'd, if that
enmity grow exceſſive, which hath
zeal to kindle it, and pretence of
Religion to warrant it: For when
that which ſhould reſtrain, and ſet
limits to a Paſſion, is made a Party
to engage it, and fuel to foment
it, no wonder if a Paſſion, which
hath no Bounds from Religion, do
impoſe none upon it ſelf. And this
occaſion of mutual Hatred, we find
obſerv'd even in the ridiculous Su-
perſtitious of *Ægypt*, when one Town
would kill and eat the Fleſh of ano-
ther, in zeal to the Calves, or Sheep,
or other Creatures, which they did
ſeverally worſhip. Now, having
ſhew'd how much miſchief *Miſtaken*
Zeal has done in the World, I need
not ſpend much time in ſhewing the
ill

ill Success that Persecution hath constantly been attended with ; the History of all Ages has done this to my hand. *Sanguis Martyrum, semen Ecclesiae*, is a Truth will last to the Worlds End. For there is scarce any Man so void of Humanity, but hath good Nature enough to compassionate those that are in misery, and at the same time to shew their abhorrence to the Authors of such Cruelties : And therefore, no wonder that Persecution doth rather encrease, than lessen the number of *Martyrs* ; for as it gives most Men a prejudice to the *Persecuting* Party, so it enclines them to commiserate the *Suffering* Party ; and this kindness to their *Persons*, does often terminate in the favouring their *Opinions*. How preposterous then is it in any State, or Government, to endeavour to force their Subjects to Unity in Religion ; when, alas ! the experience of all Ages shews how impracticable the Thing is. 'Tis true, a State may sometimes force
all

all its Subjects, to submit to an outward Uniformity in all Things that concern Divine Worship; but yet they must know, that every publick Disturbance in the Commonwealth, breaks all those Bonds asunder of dissembled Obedience, and that such Compulsions do both beget and ripen all Disorders. Thus we see, that it is Mens being so fond of their own Opinions, which gives the greatest disturbance to Mankind; and while we are so highly conceited of our own Parts and Abilities, it cannot be otherwise. Now, the only cure for this sort of Vanity, is to reflect upon the uncertainty of Humane Knowledge. The reason then, why wise Men do never appear so peremptory, and Dogmatical as others, is, because they very well know, there are but few things so certain, as to create much boldness, and confidence of Opinion. It was probably upon this Consideration, that the wise *Romans* shew'd so much Modesty, when they

they gave their Sentiments and Opinions, concluding still for the most part with these two words, *ITA VIDETUR*. 'Tis the Observation of the witty *Montaign*, *That as amongst wise Men he is the wisest, that thinks he knows least ; So amongst Fools he is the greatest, that thinks he knows most*. Humane Nature is very fallible, the wisest of Men do sometimes erre, and therefore at the very instant a Man seems *most positive*, how does he know but he may be *most Mistaken*? Do not even our very Senses sometimes deceive us? And yet most of our Conceptions are taken from the Senses, and we can scarce judge of any thing but by the help of Material Images, that are thence convey'd to us, according to that old Rule, *Nihil est in Intellectu, Quod non fuit prius in sensu*. Since therefore our Senses are so very fallacious, and from them result most of Humane Knowledge, how fond and ridiculous is it in any Man

Man to pretend to such an Assurance? *Est in ipsis rebus Obscuritas, & in judiciis nostris Infirmitas*, saith *Tully*; so slight a Thing is Humane Knowledge, That the most inconsiderable, and minutest Works of Nature, serve to Puzzle, and Confound it. *Plato* says, That in Man there is no such Thing as *Science* or *Knowledge*, 'tis but barely *Opinion*: And in another place he calls *Opinion*, a middle Thing betwixt *Ignorance* and *Knowledge*. Indeed, while we are in this World, we do but behold by the favour of a Glimmering-Light, the Phantasms and Shadows of Things, which Custom makes us take for Bodies and Truths: In a word, we may properly be said to see the wrong side of the Hangings; and let us pretend to what we will, the utmost of Humane Knowledge, is but a fair and hopeful Conjecture. Our Demonstrations are rais'd upon Principles of our own, not of Universal Nature; and, as the *Lord Bacon* notes, *We take up Opinions, suitable*
N rather

rather to the *Analogy of our selves, than that of the Universe*. How unreasonable then are those Men, who are so positive and Dogmatical in their own Opinions, that rather than admit of the least Contradiction, chuse to make the whole World an *Aceldama* and a *Babel*? And thus, have we not by sad Experience found it most true, That all the Miseries, which have attended the variety of Opinions since the Reformation, have proceeded from this Grand Mistake, the making our own private Opinions the Standard of infallible Truth? Whereas all wise Men ought to consider. That truth is a thing not certainly known; Nay possibly, the All-Wise God thinks it too dazzling a Thing for the Eyes of us poor Mortals, and therefore reserves it for our Glorified Faculties.

F I N I S.